VĀDIRĀJA THE DVAITA POET

GREAT BUT IGNORED

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SHRIRAMA PRAKASHANA
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GENERAL EDITOR SUBMITS

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D.N. SHANBHAG

PREFACE

In June 1979, my student Shri G.K.Nippani approached me expressing his desire to do research under my guidance on Vādirāja's *Yuktimallikā*. We studied the work with all seriousness which it demands. And his thesis was awarded the Ph.D.Degree of the Karnatak University Dharwad. Thus, through the grace of Vādirāja, Shri G.K. Nippani became Dr. G.K. Nippani.

In June 1981, another student Shri V.B Tadkod started his research under my guidance on Vādirāja's *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* and secured the Ph.D. Degree of the same Karnatak University. Thus again through the grace of Vādirāja, Shri V.B. Tadkod became Dr. V.B. Tadkod.

I must confess that I am grateful to these two Doctors with whom I studied some of Vādirāja's important works. This led me to realise the greatness of Vādirāja's personality as a whole. It is said:

Gaganaṁ gaganākāraṁ sāgaraḥ sāgaropamaḥ

"Sky is comparable to sky alone and ocean has similarity with ocean only."

So too it can be said :

Vādirājatīrthasamo vādirājatīrtha eva

"Vādirāja can be compared with Vādirāja only."

He is so incomparable !

The study of Vādirāja's *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* is quite fascinating. It contains manifold merits and I contributed

research articles projecting one or the other merit which charmed me. Now I have brought together in a book form, those articles after making necessary additions. There are many more merits in the poem which remain to be projected in future.

Many have helped me in my study of Vādirāja and his works. Prominent are Dr. G.K. Nippani, Dr. V.B. Tadkod, Dr. K.B. Archak, Dr. V.S. Joshi, Pt. Jayateerthacharya Malagi and Shri. D.S. Bhat. I express my deep sense of gratitude to all of them.

I am thankful to University Grants Commission, New Delhi for sanctioning the UGC Major Research Project on *'Multi-dimensional Contribution of Madhvācārya to Sanskrit Learning'* which prompted me to study the wealth of followers of Madhvācārya which includes such profound scholars like Jayatīrtha, Vyāsatīrtha, Vādirāja, Rāghavendrayati and others. And the Karnatak University has provided me all facilities in their P.G. Dept. of Sanskrit to carry on my study on the UGC Major Research Project.

Hence many thanks to the authorities of the UGC, of the Karnatak University and of the P.G. Dept. of Sanskrit.

I am thankful to *Samskrita Shodha Samsthana (Samshodhana)* Sirsi, for including this work in their *SAMŚHODHANA SERIES.*

I must express my gratitude to Shri R.K. Hegde "Font Gallery" Saptapur,Dharwad, Shri Ravi Akalwadi, Proprietor, Manohar Printing Press, Dharwad, to his staff, and to G.G. Mahale, Commercial Artist, Malapur, Dharwad for the great pains and meticulous care with which they accomplished their jobs.

30th Nov. 1996 D.N. Shanbhag.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this introduction, at the outset, I wish to bring to the notice of the scholars and the educationists a unique event which happened in the Karnatak University, Dharwad (Karnatak State) during the academic year 1986-87. During that year, the Ph.D. degree of the University was awarded to three candidates who had worked on the works of the same author. The author was the same. But he could provide material for three research students to prepare their theses and secure the Ph.D.degree of a well-established University. In addition, the subjects dealt by these research students were also distinct belonging to three different fields of knowledge : One studied critically his Sanskrit *Mahākāvya* and revealed the different poetic and other merits contained in it and judged, on the basis of his findings, that the work is a great poem fit to occupy the high pedestal adorned by the poems of Kālidāsa and other great Sanskrit poets. The subject-matter of the second thesis was the exposition of Vedānta philosophy and vindication of the tenets of the Dvaita Vedānta established and propagated by Madhvācārya and his illustrious followers. The third was an evaluation of the Kannada works of the same author which highlighted their attractive features and adjudged the writer to be one of the writers who enriched the treasure of Kannada literature. The languages of these three theses were also different. The first was written in Sanskrit, the second in English and the third in Kannada. Again in the year 1995, one more research

student submitted his thesis in Sanskrit on a Sanskrit Travelogue of the same author and secured the Ph.D. degree of the same Karnatak University.

Thus it was a unique event that one and the same writer could provide sufficient and substantial material to four research students enabling them to become eligible for the award of the Ph.D.degree of a university. Such writers are very rare in the world. Anybody can be proud of Karnatak for having given birth to such a rare writer. And he is our great Vādirāja who adorned as its twentieth pontiff, one of the eight well-known Maṭhs of Uḍupi viz, the present Svādi Maṭh.[1]

Madhvācārya's name as a great philosopher is shining brilliantly on the horizon of Indian Philosophy since last seven centuries. He vindicated through scriptures, logic and uncontradictable individual experience, tenets of true Indian philosophy which came to be known as the Mādhva or Dvaita-Vedānta which is now attracting the minds of thinkers all over the world. Madhvācārya had many illustrious followers who carried on his work and propagated his Vedānta philosophy both in the assemblies of the learned and in the worlds of the masses. Many of them were such stalwarts having firm and deep footing in the philosophical arena that they won many laurels for themselves and also for the Dvaita-Vedānta. Foremost among them can be considered to be Jayatīrtha and Vyāsatīrtha. They had a batch of eminent followers in Vādirāja, Vijayīndra, Raghūttama and Rāghvendrayati. All were profound scholars, prolific writers and invincible debaters. Their efforts made the Dvaita-Vedānta to spread far and wide as well as become deep-rooted in the Indian soil.

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1. Details of the four Ph.D. awardees : 1. Dr.V.B.Tadakod on '*Rukmiṇīśavijayamahākāvya*'; 2. Dr.G.K.Nippani on '*Yuktimallikā*' ; 3 Dr.H.G.Lokur on '*Kannada Works of Vādirāja*' and 4. Dr.V.S.Joshi on "*Tīrthaprabandha*".

Here is an attempt made to highlight the magnificent achievements of Vādirāja in different fields of society through his multifarious activities.

The unique feature of Vādirāja's life is that it manifested conclusively his greatness in manifold ways in distinct social spheres. Even a single aspect of his life and achievements is sufficient to bring name and fame to any human being. His life-span was incredibly a long one. It is rare that a human being lives for 120 years with full vigour and with all organs in tact. But Vādirāja had such a prolonged life-span and history was a witness to it. The end to his life was also quite miraculous; but it is a historical fact. He got constructed through his royal disciple a *Vṛndāvana* (sacred tomb) and entered it alive. Thus he disappeared from the mortal eyes; but he is living in it and is fulfilling the desires of his ardent devotees which is experienced by many even to-day.

He was a prolific writer. In the field of philosophy, he wrote commentaries and glosses on the scholarly works of his eminent predecessors in the field of Dvaita-Vedānta. Besides, he wrote independent works like the '*Yuktimallikā*' to expound the tenets of Dvaita-Vedānta and his exposition is both convincing to the scholar and intelligible to the common man. Polemics is an ornament to any philosopher. And Vādirāja was the recipient of the title of '*Prasaṅgābharaṇa*' (Ornament of Polemics) in the court of King Veṅkaṭapatidevarāya of Vijayanagar. He has earned a name as a great poet also. His epic-poem '*Rukmiṇīśavijaya*' has poured out profusely from the precincts of his heart his unflinching and pure devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa. The poem has brought out his poetic merits and

has made him worthy to be classed with Kālidāsa and other great Sanskrit poets. Sanskrit may be quite rich ; but it is poor in travelogue-literature, which contains a significant contribution of Vādirāja in the form of his "*Tīrthaprabandha*". It is rare that a writer composes a commentary on his own original work. But Vādirāja has written an elaborate commentary on two verses of his epic-poem and has brought to light the inner meaning contained in them. One of his unique contributions towards the study of the '*Mahābhārata*' is that he has explained one hundred thousand words of the epic. He has also written explanatory notes on the famous '*Puruṣasūkta*' of the *Ṛgveda*.

Vādirāja not only enriched the Sanskrit literature but even has made substantial contribution to Kannada literature. This includes his philosophical poems like '*Lakṣmī Śobhāne*' and '*Harisarvottama-sāra*'; mythological poems like '*Kṛṣṇabālalīle*', '*Kīcakavadhe*' and '*Gajendramokṣa*' and several devotional songs called '*Devaranāmas*'. Some opine that he authored '*Mahābhāratatātparyanirṇaya*' a Kannada prose-work. It is also believed that he must have had composed at least some works in Tulu and Telugu languages.

Thus Vādirāja was a literary genious and a prolific writer.

Vādirāja was not only a philosopher and a writer, but was also quite humane and had concern for the well-being of humanity as a whole. With this view, he brought about several religious and social reforms of far-reaching and benevolent consequences. In the religious field he had won the hearts of the entire Mādhva community. He also commanded the respect of other seven Maṭhs established by

Madhvācārya, who had laid down the *Paryāya* or rotation system. Accordingly, the pontiff of each Maṭh had the opportunity of worshipping Lord Kṛṣṇa at Udupi for a period of two months. Vādirāja improved this system extending the period from two months to two years. This enabled all the pontiffs to undertake long tours for years together, to propagate the true philosophy brought to light by Madhvācārya. The fact that such a drastic reform was willingly accepted and has been followed by all the eight pontiffs throughout until present times, and was also approved by the entire Mādhva community without a murmur or a dissenting voice, shows how high in esteem was Vādirāja held by one and all during even the early years of his life. Because this change must have had come into effect even before he was 45 or 50. Vādirāja was inordinately great. He was so great that the Maṭh, which was presided over by him had to give up its original name (Kumbhāsi Maṭh) to bear his name and become known as 'Vādirāja Maṭh'. Another addition to his glory was that the Maṭh also came to be known as 'Svādi-Maṭh' 'Sode-Maṭh' and 'Sondā Maṭh' after the name of the sacred place where his *Vṛndāvana* is situated. These later names are so popular that they have almost completely eclipsed the original name of the Maṭh. Vādirāja was benevolent to both Kings and commonality. The history has recorded how he rescued the Kings of Vijayanagar empire when they had been plunged in the mire of financial and other calamities. It was Vādirāja who was approached by Kings Kṛṣṇadevarāya and Acyutadevarāya with a request to save them from the financial crises. He took them to the ancient cave of Vālin and showed them the huge treasure lying behind a rock. But he did not wish to have even a little part of the massive wealth, inspite of their beseeching him to have a part of it. He

was a firm devotee of the Lord completely detached to any type of wordly wealth. So he took for himself the idols of Lord Rāma and Lord Viṭṭhala which had been worshipped respectively by Sugrīva and Vālin. When the Kings implored him to grant them an opportunity to serve him, he directed them to renovate the temple of Lord Kṛṣṇa at Udupi. When King Acyutadevarāya had an attack of illness incurable even by royal physicians, it was Vādirāja who cured him by administering simple water sanctified by his mystic powers.

Vādirāja's concern to create convenient circumstances to the *Aṣṭa-Maṭhs* or the eight Maṭhs established by Madhvācārya at Udupi resulted in the construction of buildings to house their head-quarters just in the vicinity of Lord Kṛṣṇa's temple. This foresight of Vādirāja is appreciated by people even to this day.

His merciful heart was bounteous even to laymen. During one of his pilgrimages, he came across a marriage party which was submerged in unbearable agony due to the sudden demise, through a snake-bite, of the bride-groom. Vādirāja rescued them by reviving his life, and gave them instruction of his '*Lakṣmī-Śobhāne*' poem which is repeated even today at the marriage ceremonies.

The presiding deity of Tirupati Tirumala Hills, Lord Veṅkaṭeśvara, inspired Vādirāja to pay a visit to his sacred shrine. But when Vādirāja went to the hill-bottom, the stones and rocks appeared to him as Sāligrāmas. He did not want to tread them with his feet. He climbed the lofty hill-top on his knees and presented a garland of Sāligrāmas to the Lord.

As we have discovered, he was a great poet who authored the '*Rukmiṇīśavijaya*', among other compositions. This particular poem, it is said, was composed at Pune with the intention of composing a Sanskrit *Mahākāvya* excelling the '*Śiśupālavadha*' of the great poet Māgha. During one of

his sojourns he camped at Pune and learnt that Māgha's poem had been adjudged as the best by the local assembly of Paṇḍits. Vādirāja wished to bring to their notice the defect in their judgment and so he took a period of 20 days from the assembly and composed his '*Rukmiṇīśavijaya*' of 19 cantos in 19 days and presented the whole epic-poem to the assembly on the 20th day. The assembly was forced to revise its decision. It acclaimed his poem to be superior to even Māgha's poem and fittingly designated him as '*Kavikulatilaka*'. It is also said that the '*Rukmiṇīśavijaya*' was paraded on an elephant at Svādi by the local King.

His '*Mahābhāratalakṣālaṅkāra*' has also an episode behind its origin. While he was camping at the holy Prayāga, Sage Vyāsa appeared before him and told. "You must know that before your birth, your mother had promised that she would worship the Lord with hundred thousand ornaments. It is now your duty to accomplish it. That will be done if you explain hundred thousand chosen words from my *Mahābhārata*." Thereafter, it is narrated, Vādirāja went to the holy Badarī and bowed down to both Sage Vyāsa and Śrī Madhvācārya. Being blessed by them he composed the '*Mahābhāratalakṣālaṅkāra*', which is a class by itself.

In Karnatak, Dharmastala happens to be an ancient sacred place attracting thousands of devotees from far and wide. It is a unique holy place in the sense that the deity is Lord Mañjunātheśvara, the priests are Mādhva (Vaiṣṇava) brahmins and the management is in the hands of Jaina Heggades. It is said that during those times the place was known as Kuḍuma. On coming to know of Vādirāja's divine powers, the Heggade of the temple requested the Saint to pay a visit to the temple. It had then just completed its three

hundred years. Vādirāja responded favourably to his request and went there. He pointed out that the installation of the deity had not been done according to proper scriptural rituals and hence the entire installation ceremony should be performed afresh. The Heggade agreed and got them performed under the personal supervision of Vādirāja himself. At the concluding function, Vādirāja blessed the gathering and named the place as 'Dharmastala' which is even now functioning true to the connotation of the term.

Nāvūru is the another holy place in the same South Kanara District of Karnatak which had received the blessings of Vādirāja. It is the place where there is the confluence of two rivers viz. Kumāradhārā and Netrāvatī. It has many *Śivaliṅgas*. Vādirāja made suitable arrangement of water for their *Abhiṣeka*.

Once when a goldsmith was chiselling an idol of Lord Gaṇeśa, it took the form of Lord Hayagrīva. He received a divine direction to present it to a mendicant visiting his place the next morning. It was Vādirāja who was its recipient. Then-onwards the whole community of goldsmiths, called Daivajña brahmins, became his disciples.

Vādirāja is believed to be one of the Ṛjus named Lātavya. And it is a fact that he had occult powers and a '*Bhūtarāja*' possessing super-human powers had become his servant. The visitors to Svādi or Sondā witness the stone-chariot standing there. It had been brought by the same *Bhūtarāja* from Himālayas together with the idol of Lord Trivikrama which was installed in the nearby temple constructed for the purpose by the local king.

The market of Udupi always makes available a variety of brinjals called '*Vādirājaguḷḷa*'. These are the fruits of blessings of Vādirāja who took pity on the poor

people and helped them to make their livelihood by growing and selling brinjals of the said variety.

Vādirāja had a very long and fruitful life of 120 years. Thus he got the rare opportunity of worshipping Lord Kṛṣṇa during four *Paryāyās*, each of two years. When the occasion of the fifth *Paryāya* neared, he granted the occasion to his disciple Vedavedya and himself worshipped for two years Lord Veṇugopāla at Svādi.

He entered alive the *Vṛndāvana* at Svādi and disappeared from mortal eyes. Thus he brought an end to his human incarnation ; but he planted an unforgettable name in the annals of Indian History and carved a place of veneration in the hearts of religious people.

It has been stated above that Vādirāja took Kings Kṛṣṇadevarāya and Acyutadevarāya to the ancient cave of Vālin and showed them the huge treasure lying behind a rock. The existence of Vālin's treasure is corroborated by other evidences. Ahobala's (circa 14th cent.A.D.) *Śrī Virūpākṣa - Vasantotsava - Campu*[2] states:

ततस्तैरुत्तरतोऽग्रतश्च किष्किन्धानगरोपकण्ठ एव वालिभण्डारगण्डशैलो वर्तत इत्युत्तरितेन तेन बलात्कृतोऽयं कविः पुरतोऽप्यगच्छत् । .....

And having gone there the poet saw
सुग्रीवाग्रजभण्डारगण्डशैल ।

Modern historians do also concur. The following passage can be read with benefit : " As early as 11th c.A.D., Anegundi was traditionally believed to be Kishkinda of the *Vānaras* celebrated in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. A Kannada inscription dated 1069 A.D. from Devighat about 10 km.

2. Edited by R.S.Panchamukhi and publised by Kannad Research Institute, Dharwad in 1953.p.64.

away from Anegundi states "*Tuṅgabhadra taṭada baḍaga Kishkindamīparvatam*" (line 11th).

"In Anegundi proper, there are many spots associated with some event or important person of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.... Further, a little away from the opposite bank is a huge mound of scoriaceous ash in the midst of palm-leaf trees locally called "Vāli Dibba of Kastha" traditionally believed to represent the ceremonious burning site of Vāli after his death. Similarly, in the western part of the village are a hill-range called "Vālibhaṇḍāra" (the treasure cell of Vāli).[3]

One of the unique features of Vādirāja's *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* is the effective use of the *Śabdālaṅkāra* called *Vākovākya* which consists of striking dialogue in a single verse. This *Alaṅkāra* has been defined by Bhoja (11th Cent. A.D.) as -

उक्तिप्रत्युक्तिमद्वाक्यं वाकोवाक्यं विदुर्बुधाः ।
द्वयोर्वक्त्रोस्तदिच्छन्ति बहूनामपि संगमे ।।
(सरस्वतीकण्ठाभरण, II.131)

This is repeated by Śrī Viśveśvara Kavicandra (14th cent. A.D.) in his *Camatkāracandrikā*. It means that the figure *Vākovākya* consists of statement and counter-statement of two persons even when many have come together. But the pertinent point to note is no other poet has made such an effective use of this *Alaṅkāra* as Vādirāja has done in his *Rukmiṇīśavijaya*. Hence a separate Chapter (No. VII) has been included in this book.

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3. Dr. A.Sundara, *New Light on Religious Trends in Anegundi Region during Vijayanagara Period*, Article in *Early Vijayanagar Studies in History and Culture*, B.M.Sri Smaraka Pratisthana, Bangalore, 1988, pp.101-2

Now a word about the words 'Great but ignored' added to the title of this book. It is seen that there are many works dealing with Classical Sanskrit Literature including Sanskrit *Mahākāvyas*. There are also several works which mention Vādirāja or deal with his works. Various scholars have written about him. But it is found that some have treated him as a very minor poet ; some have given wrong details of incidents of his life. Others have committed blunders while giving an account of his life. All these are misrepresentations and an attempt has been made in a separate chapter (VIII) to correct all such scholars who have failed to throw proper light on the great Vādirāja out of their ignorance or misunderstanding.

CHAPTER II

VĀDIRĀJA - LIFE, DATE AND WORKS

साहित्याकाशराकेशो मीमांसाटविकेसरी ।
श्रुतिकासारमीनः स वादितूलतनूनपात् ।।
वेदान्ताब्धिमहानक्रः तर्कवज्रायुधः कृती ।
शब्दचापधरो धीरो वादिराजो व्यराजत ।।

Rāmacandrācārya, *'Śri-Vādirāja-Guruvara - Caritāmṛta'*, (*VGC*) Sri Vādirājīya - Grantha Prakashana Samiti, Udupi, 1954, III. 64-65.

In the history of Indian philosophy the name of Madhvācārya (1238-1318 A.D.) shines brilliantly shedding light of true philosophy since last seven centuries. He forcefully vindicated through scriptural authority, logical acumen and uncontradictable personal experience, the cardinal doctrines of age-old Indian philosophy which came to be known as 'Dvaita Vedānta'. This *Tattvavāda* or True philosophy is now attracting the minds of thinkers all over the world.

Madhvācārya had several illustrious followers. They carried on his work and propagated the doctrines of the Dvaita Vedānta in the scholarly assemblies of the learned as well as in the circles of the common masses. They were all great scholars and won laurels also in royal assemblies for themselves and for the Dvaita Vedānta. Among them, Jayatīrtha is ranked only next to Madhvācārya and Vyāsatīrtha is ranked third. The

three-Madhvācārya, Jayatīrtha, and Vyāsatīrtha, are famous as '*Munitraya*' of the Dvaita Vedānta.

Vyāsatīrtha was followed by great stalwarts like Vādirāja, Vijayīndra, Raghūttama and Rāghavendrayati. All were profound scholars, prolific writers and invincible debaters. They made the Dvaita Vedānta spread far and wide and become deep-rooted in the minds of both scholars and the general public.

Vādirāja is thus one of the illustrious followers of Madhvācārya. In the words of Dr. B. N. K. Sharma[1], "Vādirāja is the most facile writer in Dvaita literature. His fine poetic faculty and human touch, the quick flashes of his wit and humour, his apt analogies from life and literature, and his racy way of putting things have made him the most popular and enthusiastically applauded writer in Dvaita literature. He *thinks in poetry and argues in it* ... His spiritual life and magnetic personality, coupled with his alluring poetic flair and directness of approach to the problems of philosophy and interpretation, endeared him to one and all and made it easy for him to spread the meassage of Madhva, far and wide and to establish personal contacts with the masses which brought welcone acquisition of numbers to the creed, in his time". And in the words of Prof. K.T. Pandurangi[2], "Sri Vādirājatīrtha is one of the great names in the field of Dvaita Vedānta .... He was a poet, a philosopher, a social organiser, a great debater, a prolific writer and to crown all this, a saint of great mystic eminence".

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1. *History of the Dvaita School of Vedānta and its Literature,* Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1981, p. 414 ff.
2. *Yuktimallikā* (Ed) Sarvajñacharya Seva Sangha, Davangere, 1977, Introduction, pp.xxv-xxvi

It is well known that Madhvācārya established eight Maṭhs at Udupi, the pontiffs of which were ordained to worship, by turn, Lord Kṛṣṇa, newly consecrated by him and to propagate by succession his Dvaita Vedānta. Among these Maṭhs, one was 'Kumbhāsi Maṭh' headed by Viṣṇutīrtha, Madhvācārya's younger brother. And Vādirāja happens to be the twentieth pontiff of this Maṭh, which later on also came to be known after his name as Srī Vādirāja Maṭh and because of his Vṛndāvana (sacred tomb) at Svādi or Sode, also as 'Svādi Maṭh' or 'Sode Maṭh'.

1. LIFE[3] : Vādirāja's parents are known to be Rāmācārya and Gaurī or Sarasvatī and he was born in the village Hūvinakere, near Kumbhāsi, in the Kundāpur Taluk of the present South Kanara District of the Karnatak State. It is said that he was born by the grace of Vagīśatīrtha, the nineteenth pontiff of the Kumbhāsi Maṭh. He was named as Varāha. It is said that Vāgīśa had taken an assurance from Rāmācārya and Gaurī that if their son were to be born outside the house, he would be presented to him, and it is said that due to an incident Gaurī gave birth to her son outside the house.[4] Accordingly, the young Varāha, who

3. There are three works dealing with the major incidents of the life of Vādirāja. They are (i) *Śrīvādirājaguruvaracaritāmṛta*; (ii) *Vṛttaratnasaṅgraha*; and (iii) *Śrīvādirājaguṇaratnamālā*. Here some of the incidents which reveal his greatness are narrated following the first (*VGC*) among the three.

4. सम्प्राप्ते दशमे मासे साधनद्वादशीतिथौ ।
आचार्ये पारणासक्ते तदा केदारसस्यकम् ।।
गौरेका सहसाऽऽगत्य भोक्तुं समुपचक्रमे ।
दारिद्र्यपीडिता साध्वी सस्यभक्षणतत्पराम् ।।
पत्याज्ञया गां निरोद्धुं केदारं प्राप सत्वरम् ।
तदा तत्रैव सुषुवे भास्करप्रभमात्मजम् ।। *VGC*. I 17-19

had his Upanayana or the thread ceremony at the age of five, was offered to Vāgīśa, who gladly accepted him and handed him over to Vidyānidhi, a senior disciple, to impart learning. He bestowed ascetichood on him at the age of eigth, named him 'Vādirājatīrtha' and uttered a prophecy that he would become the *Gururāṭ* (Supreme Preceptor[5]). Vādirāja continued his studies under Vidyānidhi, and after his untimely demise, under Vāgīśa himself.

On the completion of his studies, Vādirāja went on a pilgrimage and visited the sacred places scattered all over India. Vādirāja, throughout his very long life of 120 years, visited many parts of India, several times, helped deserving people by his occult powers, and won over many scholarly assemblies by his scholarship. He has given his impressions of the pilgrim-places visited, in his famous poetic travelogue *Tīrthaprabandha.*[6] It is said that during one of his sojourns, he revived the life of a bride-groom who had died due to snakebite. On another occasion, when he went to Tirupati to have the holy vision of Lord Veṅkaṭeśa, while climbing the hill, all the rocks appeared to him as sacred Sāligrāmas, and hence he climbed that lofty mountain on his knees. Vādirāja offered

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5. अष्टमेऽब्दे वराहोऽसौ वागीशमुनिशेखरैः ।
संन्यासदीक्षापात्रं स कारितस्तुष्टिमाययौ ।।
भविताऽखिलवादीन्द्रदर्पहन्ता यतीश्वरः ।
इत्यतो वादिराजाख्यां लम्भितः सद्गुरूत्तमैः ।।
रञ्जनाद्गुरुषूच्चत्वात् गुरुराडिति चेरितः ।। *Ibid.* II. 9-10

6. स्वदृष्टक्षेत्रतीर्थादिमाहात्म्यस्यावबोधकम् ।
तीर्थप्रबन्धं कृतवान् पठतामघनाशनम् ।। *Ibid.*II.16

a garland of Sāligrāmas to the Lord, which adorns the Lord even to-day.[7]

When Veṅkaṭapatidevarāya (A. D. 1543) was ruling the Vijayanagara kingdom, Vādirāja visited his capital. In the royal assembly, Vādirāja pleased all the learned scholars assembled there by his sound arguments and earned the title of "*Prasaṅgābharaṇa*" (Ornament of Argument).[8]

During one of his travels, Vādirāja visited Pune, the cultural capital of Maharashtra. There he learnt about the decision of the learned assembly to honour Māgha's *Siśupālavadha* as the best *Mahākāvya* in Sanskrit. Vādirāja sent a message to the assembly to wait for some days, so that he would get the script of his *Mahākāvya*

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7. ततो वेङ्कटशैलस्य निकटं प्राप्तवान् कृती ।
   शिलासोपानरूपेण देवमावीक्ष्य दिव्यदृक् ।।
   जानुभ्यामेव शैलेन्द्रमारुरोह महाबलः ।
   श्रीनिवासं निरीक्ष्याथ सालिग्रामसुमालिकाम् ।।
   अर्पयामास सा माला तत्कण्ठेऽद्यापि राजते ।। *Ibid.* II.23-25

8. अथो नृपसभामध्ये नृपतौ सदसस्पतौ ।
   बहुभिर्वादिभिः सार्धं शास्त्रवादोऽभवत्किल ।।
   प्रसक्ते बहुभिस्तत्र प्रसङ्गे वादिराट्सुधीः ।
   सर्वानुत्तरदानेन प्रीणयामास पण्डितान् ।
   श्रीवेङ्कटपतिर्वीरप्रतापस्तुष्टमानसः ।
   प्रसङ्गाभरणं नाम बिरुदं गुरवे ददौ ।। *Ibid.* III.1-3

   Read: "This work (*Yuktimallikā*) combines great erudition with an incredibly simple yet poetically charming style characteristic of Vādirāja, full of puns, alliteration and wit and analogies from life. No wonder he obtained the title of "Prasaṅgābharaṇa" for his surging eloquence".
   Dr. B. N. K. Sharma, *Op.cit.* p.421

from his native place and present it to the assembly to judge its merits. On getting the assembly's consent, he began to compose his *Rukmiṇīśavijaya*, each canto a day and sent it to the assembly on the twentieth day. The assembly, on perusal, found it to be better than Māgha's poem and duly honoured Vādirāja[9].

There occurred a pleasant incident in the life of Vādirāja which made the scholarly world have his *Mahābhāratalakṣālaṅkāra*. Once when he visited the sacred city of Prayāga (Allahabad), Sage Vedavyāsa appeared to remind him, his mother's assurance that she

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9. ततः पुण्यपुरीं प्राप्तो भेरीताडनपूर्वकम् ।
काव्यश्रेष्ठं माघकाव्यं गजमूर्धनि पूज्यते ।।
इत्याघोषितमाकर्ण्य सभापतिमवोचत ।
अस्मत्पुरे महाकाव्यमेकं श्रेष्ठं प्रकाशते ।।
दीयेत समयः कश्चित् दर्शयिष्ये परीक्ष्यताम् ।
अङ्गीकुर्वन्ति विज्ञौघे गुरुरेकोनविंशता ।।
दिवसैरेकदिवसे ह्येकसर्गक्रमेण सः ।।
रुक्मिणीशमहाकाव्यं निर्ममे सुरसाकरम् ।
अवेक्षणाय विदुषां संसदं प्रैषयत्सुधीः ।
परिषत्सा परीक्ष्याथ विस्मितानन्दपूरिता ।।
रुक्मिणीशमहाकाव्यमुत्तमं माघतोऽपि च ।
इत्याघोष्य च सम्मान्य प्रार्चयत्कविसत्तमम् ।।
कवीनां कुलमध्ये हि तिलकोऽयमिति प्रथाम् ।
ख्यापयामास विदुषां परिषद् गुणमोदिनी ।। *Ibid.* III.4-10

(According to Saṭpurācārya the author of *Śrī Vādirāja Guṇaratnamālā*, it was composed at Sode and the king of Sode honoured the poem because of its merits. Vide :

सोदाभूपोऽपि माघादेर्मत्वा कोटिगुणाधिकम् ।
आरोप्य करिणः पृष्ठेऽमानयत्प्रतिपत्तनम् ।। V.49

would worship the Lord, with one lakh ornaments,on his birth[10] and asked him to compose a commentary on one lakh difficult words of the *Mahābhārata*, which Vādirāja accomplished successfully[11].

On his visit to Dvārakā, he performed severe penance for six months and composed the *Madhvāṣṭaka*, (a string of eight verses glorifying Madhvācārya), recitation of which cured the burning fever of an ascetic, named Kṛṣṇayati. During his penance, Lord Hayagrīva appeared before Vādirāja and informed him of his idol in a nearby cave, which he procured for his worship.[12] During his sojourn into Gujarat he won over many new disciples.

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10. गौरी तु सुतलाभः स्याद्यदि लक्षसुभूषणैः ।
    श्रीपतिं पूजयिष्येऽहमिति सङ्कल्पवत्यभूत् ।। *Ibid.* I-9
11. प्रयागे ब्रह्मणः सन्ध्यामटे जपपरस्य हि ।।
    मुनिवेषधरो व्यासः साक्षाद्दृष्टिपथे स्थितः ।
    मात्रोपयाचितं वत्स लक्षभूषानिवेदनम् ।।
    सुपुत्रेण त्वया कार्यं महाभारतटीकया ।
    लक्षग्रन्थिपदार्थानां विवृत्त्या लक्षभूषया ।।
    मदर्चनेन मात्रोक्तं साधितं स्यादितीरितः ।
    व्यासाज्ञां शिरसा धृत्वा बदरीं गतवान्मुदा ।।
    प्रणम्य मध्वहंसेन्द्रान् व्यासमध्वप्रचोदितः ।
    लक्षालङ्कारटीकां स विलिख्यार्पयते स्म हि ।। *Ibid.* III.18-22
12. हृदये वादिराजस्य तपस्सक्तस्य तत्र हि ।
    भासमानो हयग्रीवो गुहायामत्र मे शिला ।
    तामानीयार्चय त्वं द्राक् मम प्रीतिं समार्जय ।
    इत्यादिशद्गुहां गत्वा हयग्रीवशिलां गुरुः ।।
    सूर्याधिकप्रकाशेन राजन्तीं वीक्ष्य भक्तितः ।
    नीत्वा नित्यं पूजयन्स तुतोष हरिसेवनैः ।। *Ibid.* III.28-30

When the rulers of Vijayanagara, viz. Kṛṣṇadevarāya (A.D.1509-29) and Acyutadevarāya (A.D. 1529-42) faced a financial crisis, they approached Vādirāja to save them from the difficult days. And he entered with them the age-old cave of Vālin, where he showed them an ancient treasure for their use. For his personal use, he took the idol of Rāma worshipped by Sugrīva and that of Viṭṭhala worshipped by Vālin[13]. When they begged to give an opportunity of serving the Lord, he asked them to renovate Lord Kṛṣṇa's temple at Udupi, which they did.

Once King Acyutadevarāya was attacked by a disease incurable for the physicians, which Vādirāja cured and received honour from the King[14].

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13. ततः परमहंसोऽयं पम्पाक्षेत्रं समासदत् ।।
तत्र कृष्णाच्युतौ भूपौ वहुदारिद्र्यपीडितौ ।
शरणं प्रापतुर्भूमौ कल्पवृक्षायितं यतिम् ।।
तयोरभयदायी स वालिगह्वरमाविशत् ।
तत्रोपलं प्रोक्ष्यमाणं विदारितमभूत्किल ।।
पेटिकाभशिलामध्ये मुक्तारत्नानि भूरिशः ।
दृष्टानि वादिराडाज्ञावलमालम्ब्य भूपती ।।
तान्यादाय प्रार्थयता कामितं गृह्यतामिति ।
विरक्तो यतिराट् तत्र प्रतिमायुग्ममात्रकम् ।।
सुग्रीवपूजितं रामं विट्ठलं वालिपूजितम् ।
गृहीतवान् स्वपूजार्थमन्यन्मास्तु ममेति सः ।। *Ibid* III.34-39

14. ततः कालेऽच्युतो राजा वैद्यासाध्यरुजार्दितः ।
इति श्रुत्वा वादिराजः कृपया तत्पुरं गतः ।।
मन्त्रपूतजलेनैव जहारास्य रुजं गुरुः ।
तुष्टो राजा तमारोप्य स्वसिंहासनमादरात् ।।
छत्रासनादिबिरुदान्यर्पयद्गुरुपादयोः ।
तान्यद्यापि सुपूज्यन्ते गुरुपुण्याहनि स्फुटम् ।। *Ibid.* III.42-44

Dharmasthala is a famous shrine in Karnatak, which attracts more than a million devotees every year. It is presided over by Lord Mañjunātheśvara who was re-installed there by Vādirāja[15]. It was Vādirāja who showed the way of worshipping the thousand Śiva-liṅgas at the village Nāvūru where the two rivers Kumāradhārā and Netrāvatī meet in the South Kanara District.

It is a well known fact that Madhvācārya ordained his eight asscetic disciples each being the first pontiff of a Maṭh to perform by turn, the worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa at Udupi. The period of each pontiff was of two months and it was Vādirāja who extended it to two years, which is being followed even to-day. This facilitated long tours for the pontiffs, to take the banner of Madhvācārya far and wide in the country. He also constructed the eight Maṭhs nearby Lord Kṛṣṇa's temple[16].

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15. धर्मस्थलाभिधग्रामसमीपे सञ्चरन् यतिः ।
तत्स्थलेशप्रार्थितः सन् भूतस्थलमिदं परम् ।।
नास्मदावासयोग्यं स्यादित्युक्तेन प्रयाचितः ।
मङ्गलापुरसप्तर्षिकुण्डतीरगशङ्करम् ।।
अंशतो लिङ्गरूपं तमानाय्यास्थापयन्मुदा ।
तत्राराध्याराधनेन तत्स्थलेशं प्रहर्षयन् ।।
लिङ्गोपरि नृसिंहस्य शिलां क्षेत्रप्रसिद्धये ।
न्यवेशयत्तथा भूतराजमास्थापयत्सुधीः ।।
नित्यमन्नप्रदानेन ख्यातिरस्तु स्थलस्य हि ।
इत्याज्ञाप्याचरद्देशे भक्तकल्पद्रुमो गुरुः । *Ibid.* III.51-55

16. मासद्वितयपर्यायपूजां मध्वप्रकल्पिताम् ।
वर्षद्वितयपर्यन्तां कल्पयामास सन्मतिः ।।
कल्पयामास सञ्चारे सौकर्यं यमिनां ततः ।
तथा प्रत्येकमष्टानां यतीनां निर्ममे मठम् ।।
ततः प्रभृति श्रीकृष्णपर्यायमहसम्भ्रमः ।
अत्यन्तकौतकोत्साहहेतुः सम्यग्विजृम्भते ।। *Ibid.* IV.49-51

Once a goldsmith began to create a *Pañcaloha* idol of Vināyaka. But it took the form of Lord Hayagrīva. He found it impossible to chisel it to have the desired form. When he slept brooding over the problem, in his dream he got the instruction to present it to the supplicant in the morning. It was Vādirāja who received that idol in the morning and thereafter the community of goldsmiths became his disciples[17].

Vādirāja's biographers inform that he is one of the divinities called Ṛjus (a class of souls destined to become Brahmā) named Lātavya and that he is Bhāvisamīra or the future Vāyu, when the present

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17. स्वर्णकारश्चिकीर्षन् श्रीहेरम्बप्रतिमां शुभाम् ।
पञ्चलोहद्रवं सिञ्चन्नश्वस्याकृतिमैक्षत ।।
यतमानोऽन्यथा कर्तुमशक्तस्तद्विदारणे ।
टङ्केन ताडयंश्चित्रमभेद्यां विस्मितो निशि ।।
स्वप्ने विप्रेण मूढ त्वं मा मुधा भिन्धि ताडनैः ।
देवतासन्निधाने त्वं श्वो देह्यर्थयते मुदा ।।
इति सञ्चोदितः प्रातरागताय तपस्विने ।
स्वप्नसूचितवृत्ताय वादिराजाय तां ददौ ।।
यतिराडश्ववदनं सादरं परिगृह्य सः ।
अधिवासाभिषेकादिविधिभिः परिशोध्य ताम् ।।
पूजयन् स्वर्णकारं तं सानुगं शिश्यमातनोत् ।
ततः स्वर्णकृतां वर्गस्तन्मठच्छात्रतामगात् ।। *Ibid.* IV. 69-74

incumbent becomes Brahmā, the Creator[18]. He possessed occult powers. He had under his control a powerful 'Bhūtarāja'. King Arasappanāyaka of the Sode region, in the North Kanara District, became very much pleased by the divine and benevolent personality of Vādirāja and gifted the village Sode to him and constructed a temple there. Vādirāja wished to instal the idol of Lord Trivikrama therein. The idol was at Badarī and Bhūtarāja was sent to bring it with the blessings of Vedavyāsa and Madhvācārya. And Bhūtarāja brougth the idol together with a stone-chariot, which can be seen even today at Sode[19].

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18. भाविवायो नमस्तुभ्यमृजुवर्य प्रसीद नः ।। *Ibid.* 1.27
इति भाविसमीरोऽसौ वादिराजोऽद्भुतक्रियः ।
लोकानुग्रहमातेने श्रीमध्वमतवर्धकः । *Ibid.* VI. 56-57
विन्दावस्मिन् वादिराज ऋजुर्जीवोत्तमस्त्विति ,।
प्रमाणैस्साध्यते वेदनिध्यार्याज्ञाबलान्मया ।। *Ibid* VIII.1
इत्यादिश्याह लातव्यं क्षितौ वायोर्जनिष्यतः ।।४७ ।।
वादिराजाह्वयो भूत्वा मध्वशास्त्रं प्रकाशय ,।।५० ।।
- श्रीवादिराजगुणरत्नमाला I

Read: H. Subba Rao, *Srīmad Vādirāja Ṛjutva Siddhānta* (Kannada) Sri Shirur Muṭṭ, Udupi 1972 wherein the author proves the *Ṛjutva* of Vādirāja.

19. व्यासं मध्वं तथा नत्वा विनीतः संन्यवेदयत् ।
वादिराजोक्तमाकर्ण्य त्रिविक्रममृजूत्तमैः ।।
अर्चनीयं नयेत्याज्ञामदिशत्करुणानिधिः ।
त्रिविक्रमं सहरथमानयनूरक्षसा पथि ।।
रूद्धः क्रुद्धो रथगतचक्रेणैनं निहत्य हि ।
सुमुहूर्ते निश्चितेऽथ यतयेऽर्पितवान् रथम् ।।
राज्ञा सह यतीन्द्रोऽसौ त्रिविक्रममुदारधीः ।
प्रतिष्ठिपद्रथे तत्र देवस्यागारमध्यगे ।। *VGC* VI.41-44

As Vādirāja had a long life of 120 years, he had the opportunity of worshipping Lord Kṛṣṇa during four *Paryāyas* i.e. during A.D. 1532-34, 1548-50, 1564-66 and 1580-82. And when his turn for the fifth *Paryāya* in 1596-98 approached, his disciple Vedavedya expressed his desire to perform Lord Kṛṣṇa's worship during the period. Vādirāja consented and during those two years he observed paryāya at Sode worshipping Lord Veṇugopālakṛṣṇa.[20]

After living a brim-ful mortal life of 120 years, Vādirāja decided to put an end to it and caused a sacred Vṛndāvana (sacred tomb) to be constructed for him at Sode. After blessing all the devotees he entered it on Phālguṇa Kṛṣṇa Tṛtīyā of Śārvarī (Śaka Year 1522 corresponding to A.D. 11th March 1601) and having abandoned his mortal frame therein, departed to his divine abode. It is believed that Vādirāja is, ever since then, blessing the devotees from his Vṛndāvana itself and thousands of devotees visit Sode, year after year, which has become a holy pilgrim-place in Karnatak State.

2. DATE: In Indian history, exact dates of many well known ancient personalities have remained unsolved

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20. एवं श्रीकृष्णदेवस्य पर्यायार्चनमञ्जसा ।
चतुर्वारमनुष्ठाप्य सज्जनानुद्धरन् बभौ ॥
तच्छिष्यो वेदवेद्याख्यो वृद्धो भूत्वा त्वखिद्यत ।
पर्यायपूजा न ममेत्यन्तरङ्गविदां वरः ॥
वादिराजः स्वशिष्यं तं पर्यये पञ्चमेऽत्र हि ।
त्वामाविश्याचरिष्यामि बहिस्सोदापुरे स्थितः ॥
इत्याज्ञाप्यागतस्सोदां वेणुगोपालमर्चयन् ।
उभयत्र स्वपर्यायपूजां स कृतवान् किल ॥ *Ibid.* VI.51-54

mysteries even today. Fortunately, it is not so with Vādirāja. Even though we do not have exact dates corresponding to important events which happened during his life-time, like the year of his becoming the head of the Kumbhāsi Maṭh, the dates of his birth and disappearance have been acceptable to the scholars and historians alike. The *Caramaśloka*[21] or the epitaph preserved in Vādirāja Maṭh at Sode states that he departed to his divine abode on Phālguṇa Kṛṣṇa Tṛtīyā of Śārvarī Saṁvatsara of Śālivāhana Śaka 1522. It corresponds to Wednesday, A.D.11th March 1601. His biographer Rāmacandrācārya (the author of *VGC*) was a disciple of Vedanidhi, the twenty-second pontiff of the same Sode Maṭh and was thus not far removed from Vādirāja, and hence the information given by him about Vādirāja has become acceptable. He states that Vādirāja was born on Māgha Śukla Dvādaśī of Śārvarī Saṁvatsara of Śālivāhana Śaka 1402[22]. This corresponds to Friday A.D. 12th January 1481. There are inscriptions of A.D.1571, 1582 and 1593

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21. स्वस्ति श्रीजयशालिवाहनशके सार्धात्सहस्रात्परं ।
द्वाविंशे शरदां गते प्रभवति श्रीशार्वरीवत्सरे ।।
मासे फाल्गुनिके सितेतरतृतीयायां तिथौ विद्दिने ।
स्वातीहर्षणसंयुते हरिपदं श्रीवादिराजोऽगमत् ।।

This is reproduced in *VGC* at the end of the sixth canto (*bindu*) with a verse prefixed stating his life span to be of 120 years :

शते विंशत्युत्तरे तु वत्सराणां महीतले ।
वादिराजोऽवसद्दृश्यो मध्वसिद्धान्तवृद्धये ।। VI.71

22. शालीवाहस्य सुशके पक्षाकाशयुगेन्दुके ।।
शार्वरीवत्सरे माघे शुक्लद्वादशिकातिथौ ।
ॠजुदेवः स लातव्यो धरण्यामवतीर्णवान् ।। I.30-31

which mention events connected with Vādirāja, like the consecration of temple of Lord Trivikrama at Sode and gift by Sode King Arasappanāyaka to Vādirāja.

Thus Vādirāja had his stay in the physical body for a very long period of one hundred and twenty years.

3. **WORKS** : In the words of Dr. B.N.K.Sharma,[23] "Vādirāja was a prolific writer and more than a hundred and five works stand to his credit. Of these, however, nearly half are in the nature of minor stotras and of no great importance. His major works are about twenty in number, of which more than a dozen can be designated as original works. The rest are commentaries on earlier classics of the system, very few of which have, however, been printed".

Still, it must be said, if one serveys works in various branches of knowledge in Sanskrit, Vādirāja occupies the position of a writer who contributed substantially to manifold fields of knowledge. He composed independent works vindicating the tenets of Dvaita Vedānta. He wrote commentaries on earlier Dvaita classics of Madhvācārya and Jayatīrtha. He sung the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa through his epic-poem *Rukmiṇīśavijaya*. He contributed a travelogue, a rare species in Sanskrit. He commented on his own two verses. He interpreted one lakh difficult words of the *Mahābhārata*. He explained the Vedic *Puruṣasūkta*. He contributed not only to Sanskrit literature through a variety of his compositions, but even Kannada literature has been enriched by him through his *Devaranāmas*. It is

23. *Op. cit.* p. 417

now learnt that Vādirāja did compose some devotional songs in Telugu and Tulu languages also.

Here an attempt has been made to introduce briefly Vādirāja's major works :

A. ***Original Works* : 1. *YUKTIMALLIKĀ*** : This is the ***magnum opus*** of Vādirāja. It occupies a unique place among great philosophical classics of the Dvaita Vedānta, in as much as it explains the Dvaita tenets in a simple and lucid style intelligible even to laymen. Dr. B.N.K. Sharma[24] rightly observes, " This work combines great erudition with an incredibly simple yet poetically charming style characteristic of Vādirāja, full of puns, alliteration and wit and analogies from life. No wonder, he obtained the title of 'Prasaṅgābharaṇa' for his surging eloquence. The works of Jayatīrtha and Vyāsarāya were too learned and stiff to be of use to general readers. It was Vādirāja who first brought the wisdom of his predecessors within the reach of all. ***In this respect, his work marks a new and necessary phase in the history of Dvaita Literature and breathes the spirit of a new age which produced other popular exponents of Madhva-siddhānta, both in Sanskrit and in Kannada.***"

Vādirāja's *Yuktimallikā* is great both qualitatively and quantitatively as well as in vindicating the Dvaita tenets. Quantitatively it consists of 5379 verses divided into five parts named *"Saurabhas."* The first *Guṇasaurabha* proves the *Saguṇatva* of Brahman. The second *Śuddhisaurabha* establishes His *Nirdoṣatva.* The third *Bhedasaurabha* proves the *Pañca-bhedas* or the

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24. *Ibid.* p. 421

five-fold differences so ably proclaimed by Madhvācārya. The fourth *Viśvasaurabha* confirms the *Jagat-satyatva*. And the fifth *Phalasaurabha* describes the nature of *Mokṣa* and means of securing it.

The *Yuktimallikā* can be considered as an elaborate commentary on the *Brahmasūtras*. This is accepted by scholars both ancient as well as modern. Surottamatīrtha, Vādirāja's brother who presided over the Bhaṇḍārakere Maṭh as its sixteenth pontiff, has written a commentary on the *Yuktimallikā*, wherein while giving succinctly the subject-matter of the monumental work, he states -

अधुना शिष्यमनःसमाधानाय परमतनिराकरणात्मकसमयपादोक्तमपि समयनिराकरणं पृथक्प्रस्ताव्य पुनः समन्वयाध्यायप्रतिपाद्यं सर्वगुणपूर्णत्वं गुणसौरभसर्वस्वेन मनःप्रियं कुर्वन्, तदनन्तरमविरोधाध्यायप्रतिपाद्यं निर्दोषत्वं शुद्धिसौरभसर्वस्वेन रञ्जयन्, पुनरेतदध्यायेऽपि सूत्रे सूत्रे प्रतिपादितं जीवेश्वरभेदं भेदसौरभसर्वस्वेन प्रतिपादयन्, तदनु "जन्माद्यस्य यतः" इति सूत्रप्रतिपादितजगज्जन्मादिकारणत्वलक्षणपरिरक्षणाय विश्वसौरभसर्वस्वेन जगत्सत्यतां संस्थापयन् , पुनः साधनफलाध्यायप्रतिपाद्यं साधनं फलं च फलसौरभसर्वस्वेन सङ्गृह्णन्, प्रमाणाधीना प्रमेयसिद्धिः इति न्यायेन पञ्चसौरभोक्तप्रमेयस्यापि प्रमाणसापेक्षत्वात् प्रमाणेषु च "प्राबल्यमागमस्यैव जात्या तेषु त्रिषु स्मृतम्" इति वचनात् अलौकिकेऽर्थे प्रबलप्रमाणभूतवेदस्य "न विलक्षणत्वादस्य तथात्वं च शब्दात्" इति सूत्रे नित्यतया प्रतिपादितं स्वतःप्रामाण्यं समर्थयितुं वेदापौरुषेयतां तावदादौ साधयितुमुपक्रमते ।

In the words of Dr. B.N.K. Sharma,[25] " In essence, the *Yuktimallikā* is an elaboration of the teachings of the *Brahmasūtras* as deduced by Madhva. The author has given a complete rationalistic turn to his treatment and

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25. *Ibid.* p. 422

deserves credit for many happy and original arguments and interpretations *not* found elsewhere in the other works of the system. Chapters I and II establish the twin-principles of Madhva's Theism that the Brahman is ever full of attributes and free from any kind of imperfection. The III establishes that the Jīva and Brahman can never be identical. IV indicates the reality of the cosmos, refuting incidentally, the doctrine of Māyā. The last chapter is an epitome of chapters III and IV of the *Brahmasūtras* as interpreted by Madhva".

2. *NYĀYARATNĀVALĪ* : It quotes the *Vedānta-nyāyas* or axioms to prove the Dvaita tenets by refuting Saṅkara's Advaita. It contains 901 verses divided into five chapters called *Saras*. Dr. B.N.K.Sharma observes[26] : "The style is as usual with him alliterative and epigrammatical. He tries to flabbergast his opponents by a clever and judicious mixture of theology and metaphysics. His homely analogies and persuasive rhetoric make an instantaneous appeal to the reader and therin lies his strength and popularity."

Mr. L. Stafford Betty of the California State College, Bakersfield, who has translated the *Nyāyaratnāvalī* into English, observes : "I personally find that most of Vādirāja's arguments are potentially as disconcerting to the sophisticated Non-dualist philosopher of our own day as they probably were to Vādirāja's original auditors. The *Nyāyaratnāvalī*, in other words, is far from a period piece. Anyone interested in putting Non-Dualism to the twin philosophical tests of internal consistency and reality-consistency could hardly

26. *Ibid.* p. 428

do better than acquaint himself with Vādirāja's merciless dialectic. His methodology is of the most modern and potentially devastating sort : it is what Western philosophers call the *reductio ad absurdum*, and what Indian philosophers picturesquely describe as "slaying one's enemy with his own sword." Vādirāja asks only that his rival auditors take seriously the *necessary implications* of their own philosophy. Whether the present reader comes to feel that Vādirāja misrepresents Advaita Vedānta, and thus in effect vanquishes only a "straw man", or in fact succeeds in drawing out the real implications of the system, in the process destroying utterly its intelligibility and possible truth, one thing must be granted, I think, by all : Advaita has met a most formidable opponent."[27]

3. ***HARIBHAKTILATĀ*** : It deals with *Bhakti* or devotion of Lord Viṣṇu and proves it to be the means of winning Lord's grace leading to Mokṣa. It has 394 verses.

4. ***ŚRUTITATTVAPRAKĀŚIKĀ*** : In 507 verses it vindicates the Dvaita interpretation of five famous Upaniṣadic statments viz. (i) नेह नानास्ति (ii) अहं ब्रह्मास्मि (iii) एकमेवाद्वितीयम् (i) तत्त्वमसि and (v) केवलो निर्गुणश्च।

5. ***KALPALATĀ*** : It is a sound and well reasoned refutation of the *Pramāṇanirṇaya* of the Jain monk Vādirājasūri. The *Kalpalatā* as a polemical work, is of high order and disproves the validity of Jain tenets, specially the *'Syādvāda'* or the *'Saptabhaṅgīnaya'* which occupies a prominent place in Jainism.

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27. *Vādirāja's Refutation of Śaṅkara's Non-Dualism : clearing the way for Theism;* Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1978, *Introd.* pp. xiii-xiv.

Besides these major works, we have other works of note as follows :

6) *CHAKRAMĪMĀṀSĀ* : dealing with *tapta-mudrādhāraṇa*: 7) *EKĀDAŚĪNIRṆAYA*: stressing the need of observing the *Ekādaśī*-vow; 8) *BHŪGOLANIRṆAYA*: giving the topographical details of the earth, based on the *Bhāgavata*(Chapt.V); 9)*PĀṢAṆḌAMATAKHAṆḌANA*: containing an able refutation of Jainism; 10) *SAṄKALPAPADDHATI*- describing the mode of Saṅkalpa at the beginning of religious rites; 11) *SADĀCĀRASMṚTI*- modelled on Madhvācārya's work of the same name; 12)*VIVARAṆAVRAṆA*- refuting the *Pañcapādikāvivaraṇa* of Prakāśātmayati, together with its commentary *Tattvadīpana;* 13)*ŚAKUNAMĀLĀ* -explaining the meaning of omens; 14) *SAṀSKṚTA SŪTRĀRTHA*- giving in aphoristic style the tenets of Dvaita Vedānta;15)*ADHIKARAṆANĀMĀVALI*: discussing the topics dealt with in the 223 *Adhikaraṇas* of the *Brahmasūtras*; and *16) UPANYĀSARATNAMĀLĀ :* supposed to contain ten discourses out of which only three are available, one connected with the *Upādhikhaṇḍana* of Madhvācārya and the other two explaining two verses of the *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* of Vādirāja himself.

B. *Commentaries :*

1) *MAHĀBHĀRATALAKṢĀLAṄKĀRA*- gives the meaning of one lakh selected words of the *Mahābhārata*, which have philosophical significance.

2)*MAHĀBHĀRATATĀTPARYANIRṆAYABHĀVAPRAKĀŚIKĀ* - contains a brief exposition of some important points discussed in Madhvācārya's *Mahābhāratatātparya-nirṇaya.*

3) ***PURUṢASŪKTABHĀṢYA***- is a lucid commentary on the well-known *Puruṣasūkta* of the *Ṛgveda.*

C. *Glosses :*

Vādirāja has written glosses on Madhvācārya's *Bhāṣyas* on i) *Talavakāropaniṣad,* ii) *Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad,* iii) *Ātharvaṇopaniṣad,* iv) *Kāṭhakopaniṣad,* v) *Taittirīyopaniṣad*; and on Jayatīrtha's *ṭīkās* viz. vi)*Nyāyasudhā,* vii)*Tattvaprakāśikā,* viii)*Īśāvāsyopaniṣadbhāṣyaṭīkā* and ix) *Ṣaṭpraśnopaniṣadbhāṣyaṭīkā.*

D. ***Poems :***

1) ***RUKMIṆĪŚAVIJAYA***: It is classified as a *Mahākāvya.* It contains 1241 verses divided into nineteen cantos (The merits of this work have been highlighted in succeeding chapters).

2) ***TĪRTHAPRABANDHA***: Even though Sanskrit Literature is rich in all the branches of learning, its one lacuna is, works dealing strictly with historical incidents. Therein too travelogues are very few in number. This work of Vādirāja is a very informative travelogue clothed in good poetry. It contains a first-hand information of several holy rivers and pilgrim- centres scattered all over India. The poetry embodied in this work generates devotion in the hearts of the readers. One or two examples suffice to reveal the merits of Vādirāja's poetic merits. This is the description of sacred Udupi:

रूप्यात्मकामरपुरस्सर सन्निरूप्य
रूप्यात्मकं च भवतः कृपयागतस्य ।
रूप्यात्मकालय कृतालय तत्त्वमेव
रूप्यात्मनो गतिरिहापि तदीश पाहि ।। (I.13)

("O Lord, you are the foremost of the gods who are supreme as standards of comparison ; you are fit to be described by your devotees ; you have mercifully come to this Rūpyapīṭha; your divine home Vaikuṇṭha bestows their own intrinsic bliss on the liberated souls who get a divine form similar to you ; you are the final resort of one and all ; O Lord protect me here also.")

This is how he describes the famous Badarīnātha :-

अमरीभ्रमरीपुञ्ज सुमरीचिभिरञ्चिता ।
बदरी वद रे किं किं अधरीकुरुते न सा ।। (II-41)

("Speak out, which place is not made inferior to itself by this Badarī which is adorned by brilliant rays of the bee-like divine damsels ?")

A meaningful play on the word Paṁpā :

पम्पा सम्पत्करी सेयं किं पापं न हरेन्नृणाम् ।
याऽधोमुखीकरोत्येतन्नामोच्चारणमात्रतः ।। (III-15)

("This Paṁpā bestows wealth. What sin of men is not removed by it ? By the utterance of even its name it makes sin face downwards (i.e. perish)". The word *'Paṁpā'* has two components *Paṁ* and *Pā*. And it is the reverse of *Pā* and *Paṁ*, the components of the word *Pāpaṁ* and so the utterance of *Paṁpā* destroys *Pāpaṁ* or sin).

Vādirāja himself has beautifully summed up the merits of his *Tīrthaprabandha*, which every reader should agree with :-

नानावृत्तं स्वयात्राक्रमपरिचितसुक्षेत्रमाहात्म्ययुक्तं
शब्दालङ्कारबद्धं शमलकुलहरश्लाघनीयार्थहृद्यम् ।
श्रीनाथप्रीतिहेतोः हयवदनकृपाम्भोधिसम्भूतरत्नं
चक्रे तीर्थप्रबन्धं बहुगुणभरितं वादिराजो यतीन्द्रः ।। (IV-46)

("Vādirāja, the great ascetic, has composed this *Tīrthaprabandha*, filled with many an excellence. It contains various metres. It describes the greatness of the holy places visited by him during his pilgrimages. It is endowed with poetic figures of words. It is pleasing with its sense, capable of destroying the heaps of sins. It has arisen as a jewel from the ocean-like mercy of God Hayagrīva")

3) ***SARASABHĀRATĪVILĀSA*** : It is a poem of 12 cantos describing poetically the Dvaita tenets like supremacy of Viṣṇu, nature and functions of Lakṣmī, Vāyu and others.

Besides these three major works testifying to the poetic merits of Vādirāja, two more poems viz. *Kavikadambakaṇṭhabhūṣā* and *Svapnavṛndāvanākhyāna* are ascribed to him.

There are also many more works believed to have been composed by Vādirāja. Mention may be made of his commentaries on *Viṣṇusahasranāma* and *Sanatsujātīya* both being parts of the *Mahābhārata*.

Vādirāja has contributed many eulogistic songs called *Devaranāmas, Kīrtanas, Ugābhogas, Suḷādis* and the like to Kannada literature. And it is believed that he sang the glories of the Lord also through Telugu and Tulu languages.

Thus, a survey of the works of Vādirāja suffices to prove how his poetic genius functioned in several branches of learning and through several languages. Rightly does Prof. K.T.Pandurangi[28] conclude " Sri Vādirāja is a prolific writer....... he has enriched Dvaita literature both in Sanskrit and Kannada. He has written both for scholars as well as common man. His works have scholastic appeal as well as devotional appeal. We find in him a scholar, a poet and a great saint of mystic eminence". And in the words of Dr. K.M.Krishna Rao[29]. "The great Vādirāja, the contemporary of Vyāsatīrtha, was a prolific composer and writer. He is renowned as a great leader of both the Vyāsakūṭa and the Dāsakūṭa. (The Vyāsakūṭa comprised learned pandits who carried on their expositions and religious disputations through the medium of Sanskrit and the Dāsakūṭa was made up of the singers of Kannada songs, which they sang from door to door, thus carrying the message of devotion to God (bhakti), knowledge of his glories (jñāna) and the need for detachment (vairāgya) through the Kannada language.) Among-Vādirāja's Kannada works are *Vaikuṇṭha Varṇane, Lakṣmī Śobhāne, Swapnapada, Kīchakavadha* and *Guṇḍakriyā*, with the '*Aṅkita*' of Hayavadana."

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28. *Op. cit.* pp. xxviii-xxix
29. *Karnatak through the Ages*. Literery And Cultural Department, Govt of Mysore, Bangalore, 1968, P 715

CHAPTER III

RUKMIṆĪŚAVIJAYA

Contents in Brief

Canto I

The epic poem *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* begins with invocatory verses wherein the poet, Vādirāja prays to Supreme God Nārāyaṇa as well as to His form Hayagrīva. He bows down to Goddess Rukmiṇī also. He praises Madhvācārya, wishes to possess the great Ācārya always in his mind, and clarifies that he intends to describe following Madhvācārya, the glories of Lord Nārāyaṇa even though he is aware that the great Acārya alone is capable to describe them. He declares that he is a disciple of Vāgīśatīrtha and shows his modesty by saying that his poem should not be discarded due to his lack of learning, because a flower-garland is not discarded even though woven by an unskilled one. Further Vādirāja appeals that just as Goddess of wealth inspite of being fickle-minded is respectfully accepted, so too his poem should be received by the wise, even though there might have crept into it, some blemishes.

With this introduction the story begins.

Once goddess Earth being unable to sustain the burden of demons, resorted to god Brahmā. But Brahmā, Rudra and other gods considering themselves unable to remove the misery of the goddess, approached Lord Nārāyaṇa. The Lord, becoming pleased by the eulogies of the gods assured them the redress of her agony. The Lord instructed His consort Goddess Lakṣmī : "Beloved, depart for the mortal world. Take out the foetus

growing in the womb of Devakī, a wife of Vasudeva and place it into the womb of Rohiṇī, his another wife". The Goddess did likewise.

Thus divine serpent Mahāśeṣa grew in the womb of Rohiṇī and was born as Balarāma. Then Lord Nārāyaṇa entered the womb of Devakī and was born as Lord Kṛṣṇa at the moon-rise on the eighth day of the dark half of the month Śrāvaṇa. [The day since then came to be known as the *Kṛṣṇāṣṭamī* or *Kṛṣṇajayantī* or the birthday of Lord Kṛṣṇa.]

At the very moment of Lord's birth, his parents who had been chained and put behind bars by Devakī's brother, the tyrant Kaṁsa, the ruler of Madhurā (present Mathurā in U.P.) became free and also were overwhelmed with joy. The goddess Earth becoming assured of the end of her agony was immensely pleased. The whole world plunged in delight. At the instruction of the Lord, His consort descended on the mortal world in the form of goddess Durgā, from the womb of Yaśodā, the wife of Nanda of Gokula. Then Kṛṣṇa thought of moving to Gokula with the intention of killing there, Kaṁsa's assistants before finishing off Kaṁsa. At His instruction Vasudeva carried child Kṛṣṇa to Gokula. Then as it was raining, Śeṣa served the child making his hood an umbrella and river Yamunā gave way for Vasudeva enabling him to cross her easily.

Canto II

Vasudeva entered Gokula and reached Nanda's abode and placed child Kṛṣṇa there and brought back child Durgā. At dawn, Kaṁsa came to Devakī and saw Durgā rising high into the sky and addressing him: "Your killer is growing elsewhere". On hearing this, Kaṁsa freed both Devakī and Vasudeva. Then Durgā joined Devakī as a child. Then gods became happy on realising that the end of their enemies was nearing. The maidens of Gokula began to visit Nanda's abode to have the sight of child Kṛṣṇa. Nanda distributed thousands of cows as gifts to brahmins

and abundant wealth to bards and other worthies. People of Gokula celebrated with much pomp, the birth of Kṛṣṇa in their country-side. The revered brahmins performed befitting purificatory rites. Child Kṛṣṇa began to grow giving delight to all, especially to his mother and women-folk of Gokula.

Kṛṣṇa was thus growing being the delight of all eyes. Once, there arrived demoness Pūtanā at the command of cruel Kaṁsa to kill Kṛṣṇa. On seeing him alone she lifted him and began to feed him through her poisoned breasts. But under the guise of drinking her milk, Kṛṣṇa sucked her life itself and thus killed her. In this world, whatever evil is shot at the magnanimous, it certainly boomerangs at the shooter itself! There were two souls in the body of Pūtanā, one of demoness Tāṭakā which descended to the nether world and the other of divine damsel Ūrvaśī which rose to the heaven.

Then Nanda celebrated rites like taking out of the house and showing the sun, for Kṛṣṇa on the twelfth day of his birth. When his mother Yaśodā and others were fully engaged in the celebrations, there arrived a demon, again at the instructions of Kaṁsa, to kill Kṛṣṇa. He was Śakaṭāsura who was killed by Kṛṣṇa with a kick.

Canto III

After Śakaṭāsura was killed, there came another demon named Tṛṇāvarta to meet his death at Kṛṣṇa's hands. Yaśodā and other ladies of Gokula were enjoying the child-like sports of Kṛṣṇa in his cradle. Once he swallowed a little of earth and was scolded by his mother Yaśodā. Thereat, he opened his mouth and showed therein the entire universe to her! Thereafter Gargācārya named the two children as Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa began to crawl, to speak indistinctly and to walk. Then he started visiting surrounding houses. There he began to

steal milk and milk-products to the pleasure of those cowherdesses. They complained to Yaśodā about his theft and other misdeeds, but it was only out of immense pleasure. Thus, everyone was enjoying Kṛṣṇa's sports and pastimes in Gokula. Kṛṣṇa had become one and the only centre of affection and admiration of one and all at Gokula.

Canto IV

One day, Yaśodā was churning the curds when Kṛṣṇa with soiled body approached her. She affectionately took him on her lap and while feeding him milk, began to wipe off the dirt from his body. Before starting the work of churning the curds, she had placed a pot of milk on the burning hearth and it began to boil. Yaśodā desired to prevent it from overflowing and went to the hearth leaving behind Kṛṣṇa who became angry on her ignorance of the fact that he is the Supreme Lord who can control even god fire; and he threw a stone at the curds-pot and broke it. Then he gave the butter to a cat and left the place.

On her return, Yaśodā did not see Kṛṣṇa there and hurriedly went out and reached him. She began to threaten him with a stick in her hand and thought of binding him down with a rope. But no amount of ropes could suffice to bind him. This made her realise that her son is the Supreme God and this realisation on her part made him allow her to bind him. Then she tied him to a mortar which had helped him to reach to the butter-pot. But he went out with that mortar itself and felled the two trees and released his two devotees viz. Nala Kūbara and Maṇigrīva who had been reduced to the form of two trees due to a curse. They came out of the trees and having sung the glories of Kṛṣṇa went to their heavenly abode.

Due to the multifarious activities of Kṛṣṇa, Gokula became crowded with people and he desired to move to

Vṛndāvana to reside. But he had to force his kinsmen to prepare to leave Gokula for Vṛndāvana. Towards this end, he created from his hair numberless wolves and being frightened by them, all the residents of Gokula left for Vṛndāvana and made it their abode.

At Vṛndāvana, once a demon attacked Kṛṣṇa in the guise of a calf. And this Vatsāsura was killed by him. Then arrived another demon named Bakāsura with the intention of swallowing him. But Kṛṣṇa killed him by tearing asunder his mouth.

Once Kṛṣṇa learnt that a serpent by the name Kāliya has rendered the water of river Yamunā, nearby Vṛndāvana, poisonous and consequently he thought of punishing and driving away the deadly serpent. Hence, he went to the river one day, early in the morning, alone and jumped into the river where it was residing. It attacked Kṛṣṇa and was tamed by him, who began to dance on its broad hood. Here, in the Vṛndāvana people became anxious on not seeing Kṛṣṇa, began to search him and reached the river following his foot-steps. They became delighted on seeing Kṛṣṇa dancing on the serpent. There also arrived gods Brahmā, Śiva and others and watched his dance with their mouths singing his eulogies. Then on being implored by Kāliya's wives, he allowed them to depart safely from the river to the ocean. Thus the water was rendered free from poison.

Canto V

Once during night, wild fire began to surround Vṛndāvana. Kṛṣṇa swallowed it and protected his kith and kin. Then he went to Gokula. In Vṛandāvana a demon was tormenting people through his form of a tree by emitting poison and by producing poisonous leaves and fruits. Many met their death by

its contact. Kṛṣṇa destroyed the tree. Other demons who were harming the cows of Gokula through their cow-forms, were also destroyed.

In Vṛndāvana, a cowherd by name Kumbhaka had declared that his daughter named Nīlā would marry the person who would vanquish his seven oxen. And Kṛṣṇa took the challenge and married her by taming the seven oxen. Then there arrived a demon named Dhenuka in the form of a donkey, who was killed by Balarāma. Thereafter Balarāma killed demon named Pralamba and Kṛṣṇa killed another demon named Vyoma. Kṛṣṇa then devoured the wild fire which was surrounding Vṛndāvana.

The blessed cowherd-maidens desired to win Kṛṣṇa as their husband and began to worship goddess Durgā to achieve their objective. Once those maidens were taking bath in river Yamunā having placed their garments on the bank. Kṛṣṇa carried away those garments and having realised that they were fit to become his beloveds, returned the clothes to them.

One day, when the cowherds had sojourned to the forest with Kṛṣṇa and with their cattle, they became fatigued. They saw that at a nearby place priests were performing a sacrifice. The cowherds went to the sacrificial hall and begged food for Kṛṣṇa. But the priests did not give any food to them, fearing that, that would violate the religious precepts. The cowherds then went to the wives of those priests and they gladly gave food for Kṛṣṇa and thus pleased him.

Kṛṣṇa thought of teaching a lesson to Indra and hence instigated the cowherds to stop the sacrifice which was being performed to please Indra. Instead, he advised them to worship Mount Govardhana. They obeyed him. Kṛṣṇa went round the mountain and took its form and received for himself oblations meant for Indra. As a result Indra became terribly angry and

directed the clouds to pour heavy rains. Kṛṣṇa lifted the mountain and held it as an umbrella and protected both the cowherds and the kine against the onslaught of heavy showers.

Canto VI

Kṛṣṇa then departed for Gokula with the cowherds and the cattle. Gods and human beings began to sing his glories. Indra realised his guilt and with repentance approached Kṛṣṇa and begged his pardon.

Once, Nanda went to river Yamunā to have an untimely bath. Varuṇa's servant, who was guarding the place, captured him and took him to Varuṇa. Kṛṣṇa went to Varuṇa's abode and became pleased with his firm devotion. Varuṇa worshipped Kṛṣṇa and gladly released Nanda.

The day ended. The sun disappeared. The moon rose in the sky. The world plunged in moonlight. Kṛṣṇa went to Vṛndāvana for sport and pleasure. He played melodiously on his flute and that enchanted the entire universe which became immensely pleased. All the cowherd-damsels abandoned whatever they were doing and ran to Vṛndāvana being attracted by the melody of Kṛṣṇa's flute. Kṛṣṇa tested the firmness of their devotion by asking them to return to their kith and kin, but they in turn asserted that Kṛṣṇa himself is their all in all-father, mother, husband, friend, beloved and so on. He became very much pleased with their clever replies to his searching questions, showing their firm love to him and pleased them by love-sport. They became overwhelmed by passion. Kṛṣṇa thought of playing with their emotions and disappeared from their sight. As a result, they became confounded and wandered in that forest in search of Kṛṣṇa singing his eulogies.

Canto VII

This canto describes the pangs of those love-striken damsels submerged in Kṛṣṇa's love.

They wandered about asking the whereabouts of Kṛṣṇa to trees, creepers, bees, birds, deer, lotus-ponds, the flute, Vṛndāvana, the night, river Yamunā, breezes and whatever came across them. At last when all the enquiries proved futile, they submitted to Kṛṣṇa himself praying for his vision and company.

Canto VIII

The cowherdesses lamented seeking the company of Kṛṣṇa : "O Kṛṣṇa, we are love-striken. You love your devotees and it is your duty to protect us, your devotees. Make us, your slaves, as your own. We are born as cowherdesses only because of your directions sent through Brahmā, the Creator. If you do not grant us your company, we will put an end to our this mortal existence itself. We cannot forbear the pangs of your separation. Therefore please come and please us by sporting with us. We envy your flute which enjoys the pleasure of your kiss, while we are deprived of the same pleasure. O you Kṛṣṇa's flute ! please bring him here. O Kṛṣṇa, if you do not protect us then your assurance in the seriptures that "I look after the welfare of my devotees", will become a futile boast. You must protect us.Otherwise we will perish."

When they were thus bewailing over their miserable plight and crying aloud for Kṛṣṇa's company, there occurred moon-set. And Kṛṣṇa became visible and pleased them with his love-sport.

This love-sport of Kṛṣṇa became famous as *Rāsakrīḍā*. The cowherdesses became immensely pleased by that circular dance having Kṛṣṇa in the centre.

Canto IX

On beholding the *Rāsakrīḍā* of Kṛṣṇa and the cowherdesses, the wild beasts stood still to enjoy that sight and gods began to sing Kṛṣṇa's eulogies with delight. Having heard the melody of Kṛṣṇa's flute, Brahmā, Vāyu and Śiva became much delighted. During that dance, Kṛṣṇa's feet which were normally difficult to be seen, became easily visible to one and all. Bees, swans, parrots, cuckoos, peacocks and other beings flocked there to witness that divine dance to their joy. On seeing Kṛṣṇa's dance, peacocks began to dance with their feathers fully stretched out. Trees worshipped him by showers of flowers. Bees hummed melodiously. Deer and other beasts looked with full attention. And serpents nodded with their raised hoods.

Kṛṣṇa went with his beloved cowherdesses to river Yamunā for water-sport. After the water-sport, all returned to Gokula and Kṛṣṇa visited their abodes and by his love-sport pleased all of them.

Canto X

Kṛṣṇa after spending the night in love-sport with the cowherdesses bid farewell to them at dawn.

Once, Nanda was performing Durgā-worship in the Durgāvana. There came a Vidyādhara named Sudarśana who had been reduced to the form of a serpent due to the curse of Aṅgīrasas. He bit Nanda. Kṛṣṇa kicked the serpent who regained his Vidyādhara-form, bowed down to Kṛṣṇa with gratitude and departed to his heavenly abode with delight.

One day, at night when Kṛṣṇa was sporting with cowherdesses, a demon named Śaṅkhacūḍa arrived there stealthily and was killed by Kṛṣṇa. He possessed a brilliant jewel which Kṛṣṇa took and gave to Balarāma. Thereafter,

another demon named Ariṣṭa came to attack Kṛṣṇa in the form of a bull and Kṛṣṇa uprooted his horns and killed him using themselves only as his weapon. Then there came another demon by name Keśin, in the form of horse and opened his mouth to devour Kṛṣṇa who thrusted his arm into his opened mouth and extracted out his life itself. Thus Keśin met his death.

At this stage, sage Nārada met Kaṁsa and incited him to imprison Vasudeva : "O Kaṁsa ! You must be considering Ugrasena to be your father. It is not true. You are an illegitimate child. You happen to be the chief of demons whereas Kṛṣṇa is the lord of gods. The fact is, Kṛṣṇa was born to your sister Devakī, but your brother-in-law Vasudeva, being afraid of you, took him to Nanda at Gokula". On hearing this account of Vasudeva's betrayal, Kaṁsa became too irritated and desired to kill him. But Nārada prevented him with the result that Vasudeva was imprisoned by Kaṁsa.

Then Nārada came to Kṛṣṇa and reported Kaṁsa's atrocities with the request to take suitable action to stop them.

After Nārada took leave of Kṛṣṇa there arrived at Gokula, Akrūra with a message from Kaṁsa to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa heartily welcomed him and enquired about the welfare of Vasudeva and others :-

"Akrūra, are you doing well there ? Is my father living with pleasure and delight ? Are you preparing for eternal liberation? What are Kaṁsa's plans ? How should I act ? Please tell me." Akrūra replied. "Kṛṣṇa ! what is not known to you ? You know, Vasudeva is behind bars ! He is remembering always you alone. I, who am nearby you, need not worry about liberation, because your vicinity itself is the supreme liberation ! O Lord ! why speak anything more? By your sight itself, I have realised the knowledge of the universe. Really, that cruel

Kaṁsa has acted friendly with me by sending me as his messenger to you, because of which, I have this vision of your beautiful form. Now please listen to the message.

"Kaṁsa wants to harm you on the pretext of the bow-festival. You attend it, destroy him and please your devotees."

Kṛṣṇa consented and started for Madhurā, Kaṁsa's capital. The cowherdesses tried to prevent Kṛṣṇa from leaving Gokula. But Kṛṣṇa pacified them and accompanied Akrūra in his chariot. On his way, Akrūra went to river Yamunā and became immensely pleased by seeing Kṛṣṇa's form in it.

On reaching the outskirts of Madhurā, Kṛṣṇa sent Akrūra alone inside the city. For Akrūra, separation from Kṛṣṇa was unbearable and so he prayed Kṛṣṇa to be his guest and make his abode his dwelling. But Kṛṣṇa consoled him by pacificatory words and Akrūra had to enter the city alone.

Canto XI

At sunrise, Kṛṣṇa started towards the city of Madhurā. On his way, he was greeted by his devotees with various offerings. He met a haughty washer-man whom he desired to punish. Kṛṣṇa asked some garments from him which he refused and Kṛṣṇa punished him by cutting off his head. Further, he met a hump-backed woman who offered him cosmetics and got her deformity cured. Similarly, a barber and a florist got their desires fulfilled by honouring Kṛṣṇa.

Then Kṛṣṇa went to the place where the bow had been kept and broke it into two halves. With those pieces he killed its guards. On seeing this, wrestlers of Kaṁsa got frightened. Then there occurred sun-set. Kṛṣṇa left the city for his abode outside.

On knowing Kṛṣṇa's breaking the bow, Kaṁsa got frightened. He could not enjoy night-rest; he was tormented by evil dreams.

At sun-rise, Kṛṣṇa again entered the city with his cowherd-friends. While going to the wrestling hall, he was stopped at the gates by a terrific and mighty elephant named Kuvalayāpīḍa, which was destroyed by Kṛṣṇa. He plucked out its teeth and handed over one to Balarāma, keeping another for himself to be used as weapons.

On entering the wrestling-hall, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma wrestled, respectively, with Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika and killed them. Then came the turn of Kaṁsa, who came with his army to attack Kṛṣṇa. Indra sent his chariot for Kṛṣṇa who used it to fight and kill Kaṁsa's soilders. At this, Kaṁsa became furious and decended from his chariot to attack Kṛṣṇa with a sword. Kṛṣṇa killed him with his hand-blows. There were two souls in the body of Kaṁsa. The demon's soul went to the hell, whereas that of sage Bhṛgu went to his heavenly abode. Feigning fatigued Kṛṣṇa went to river Yamunā to relax.

Canto XII

After slaying Kaṁsa, Kṛṣṇa enthroned Ugrasena, Kaṁsa's father as the king of the Yādavas and assured him that himself, Balarāma and others would be serving him as faithful servants. Then he released his parents Vasudeva and Devakī from imprisonment. They on their part became immensely delighted and sung his glories.

Thereafter, Vasudeva prepared to celebrate the Upanayana-ceremony of both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. All sages assembled there to witness that unique occasion. After the ceremony, both of them went to preceptor Sāndīpi for education.

Within sixty-four days they fully learnt the sixty-four arts. On the completion of education, Kṛṣṇa asked about the fee to be paid to the preceptor. The latter asked Kṛṣṇa to bring back his son who had been dead. Kṛṣṇa went to the sea and killed a demon named Śaṅkha and obtained the conch named Pāñcajanya. From there, he went to Yama's abode and blew his conch. Yama was pleased to have Kṛṣṇa's vision ; he handed over Sāndīpi's son to Kṛṣṇa who took him to his father, who received him with pleasure.

Then Kṛṣṇa returned to Madhurā and stayed there imparting useful counsel to king Ugrasena who cultivated full reverence to Kṛṣṇa.

Canto XIII

While staying at Madhurā, Kṛṣṇa remembered father Nanda, mother Yaśodā and his beloved cowherdesses at Gokula and sent Uddhava to tell them about his well-being and love to them.

Uddhava reached Gokula at sun-set and was pleased to witness the sports of the cowherds and the kine there. Uddhava had the pleasant surprise of seeing everybody worshipping Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa only. In every house, Kṛṣṇa's sports were being sung; flowers and perfumes were offered to him ; the parrots were chanting Kṛṣṇa's name ; the cuckoos were imitating the melody of his flute ; the bees were seated in lotuses which were like his feet ; and every house had been adorned to welcome him.

On entering Gokula, Uddhava first went to the abode of Nanda, where all became delighted to learn Kṛṣṇa's love and regard towards them. Then he went to the cowherdesses who had become emaciated due to the pangs of separation from Kṛṣṇa. They began to express their feelings to Uddhava, under the

pretext of addressing a bee as they did not want to talk to Uddhava, a stranger. They poured out their agony before him. He consoled them with coaxing words and returned to Kṛṣṇa.

Meanwhile Kaṁsa's wife, by name Asti, went to her father Jarāsandha and reported Kaṁsa's death at the hands of Kṛṣṇa. Jarāsandha declared war on Kṛṣṇa and marched with his large army to attack Madhurā. But Kṛṣṇa and his army was far superior to them. As a result, in the battle, Kṛṣṇa vanquished Jarāsandha and his army and drove them all back to their Magadha country.

Canto XIV

On the victory of Kṛṣṇa over Jarāsandha, there resounded eulogies of Kṛṣṇa sung by gods, sages, siddhas and other divinities. Kṛṣṇa created Pradyumna who killed Ekalavya that had come to fight on behalf of Jarāsandha. Jarāsandha discharged the mace granted to him by Śiva at Kṛṣṇa which fell upon his own mother Jarā and killed her Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma brought about heavy destruction in the army of Jarāsandha which infuriated his bosom-friend Siśupāla who shot showers of arrows at Kṛṣṇa. But he could not forbear the counter-attack of Kṛṣṇa, who reduced to pieces not only Śiśupāla's arrows, but even his bow, crown, umbrella and the flag. On his part, Balarāma destroyed the horses and the charioteer together with the chariot, of Jarāsandha and captured him, But on the instructions of Kṛṣṇa he released him to go to his capital.

Even though vanquished thus, Jarāsandha persisted in attacking Kṛṣṇa. Once again he built up his army and marched against Madhurā. He camped on the banks of river Yumanā. At sunrise Kṛṣṇa also prepared his army and marched to conquer

Jarāsandha. He properly distributed his army and attacked from three directions. This attack was unbearable for Jarāsandha and his army. Some soldiers of Jarāsandha sought with folded hands, protection from Kṛṣṇa which was granted. Some others became target of Kṛṣṇa's arrows and met their death. Others ran away from the battle-field to save their lives. At last Jarāsandha was captured by Kṛṣṇa, who released him considering him to be too insignificant to be killed by him.

When Jarāsandha began to attack Madhurā repeatedly, Kṛṣṇa decided to protect his people taking them to a distant place. And he built a new city 'Dvārakā' in the western ocean and therein settled his kith and kin. One by name Kālayavana came to attack Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa made him enter the cave wherein Mucukunda was sleeping. Kālayavana mistook him to be Kṛṣṇa himself pretending to be asleep and disturbed his sleep. Mucukunda opened his eyes and burnt Kālayavana to ashes.

When Kṛṣṇa was thus living in Dvārakā, one day a brahmin arrived there with a letter to Kṛṣṇa from Rukmiṇī, the princess of Vidarbha. The letter contained her prayer : "Kṛṣṇa ! I long to marry you. You are the most fittest husband to me. Since I heard about you from Nārada, my mind is firmly rooted in you. I have also heard from the same sage that you have decided to marry me only. Some others are desiring my hand and they should be destroyed by you." Kṛṣṇa responded to the letter and started in his chariot towards Vidarbha. Before his reaching the capital of Vidarbha, Jarāsandha, Siśupāla and other wicked kings had already arrived there and so, Kṛṣṇa did not enter the city; he camped outside itself. People thronged to see his beautiful form and judged him as the suitable husband to their princess, Rukmiṇī.

As a part of the marriage ceremony, Rukmiṇī came in a procession to worship her family-deity whose temple was outside the city. After the worship, she met Kṛṣṇa who welcomed her in his chariot and drove away towards Dvārakā.

Canto XV

Thus, while Kṛṣṇa was travelling with Rukmiṇī in his chariot to Dvārakā, Śiśupāla and others attacked him, with the intention of gaining Rukmiṇī. But they were defeated and driven away. Then Rugmī, Rukmiṇī's brother who had promised her hand to Siśupāla came to attack Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa broke his bow and insulted him by shaving off his head. Thereafter, Kṛṣṇa reached Dvārakā with Rukmiṇī with pomp and glory.

Then Kṛṣṇa went to the garden 'Mūlamādhava' with his kith and kin and other kings to marry Rukmiṇī according to religious injuctions. On reaching the garden, some kings took the role of bride-groom's party and some others bride's party. For the engagement ceremony the bride-groom's party went to the place where bride's party had settled. Astrologers examined the horoscopes of both Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī and declared that the two tally in all respects. The bride's party became ready to give Rukmiṇī in marriage to Kṛṣṇa on certain conditions: "She should not be entrusted with any onerous task. Kṛṣṇa should not leave her at any time, nor should he get angry upon her. When we send a message, she should be sent to us. He should not marry any other maiden, nor should he forget us, his new relatives".

The bride-groom's party told its requirements: "Kṛṣṇa is not an ordinary house-holder. Entire universe of fourteen worlds is his home. Rukmiṇī as its mistress, will have to look after all the properties as well as the children, like god Brahmā and

others. As she is very capable, this work will not be burdensome to her. We promise that Kṛṣṇa will never leave her even for a moment. He will always be accompanied with her on all occasions. He will never become angry upon her. He will not marry any other lady. Even when other damsels marry him, he will sport only with Rukmiṇi residing in their bodies".

The bride's party confessed: "We are not in a position to give anything as dowry. We do not possess even chariots or horses or elephants and the like fit to be given to him. We will give in marriage only this Rukmiṇī. Please do not expect anything more from us". And the bride-groom's party replied: "Our Kṛṣṇa is fully contented. He does not expect anything except the side-glances of this Rukmiṇī. Verily, those are capable of bestowing unlimited riches even to gods like Brahmā and Rudra".

Then the marriage-ceremonies began. Accordingly, after Samāvartana ceremony, Kṛṣṇa started on pilgrimage. The bride's party stopped him saying- "You need not go on pilgrimage. You unite with this Rukmiṇī who has all the pilgrim-places in her". Kṛṣṇa agreed and performed some religious rites preceding the marriage-ceremony in that Mūlamādhava-garden.

Canto XVI

(Vādirāja the poet, has fancied a Swayaṁvara-scene here to prove the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa over all gods)

Rukmiṇī entered the marriage-pandal and beheld all gods assembled there and began to consider the relative merits of each of them in her own mind. Her own intellect acted the role of a friend describing the gods to her.

"Rukmiṇi ! this is god Brahmā born out of the lotus which sprouted from the navel of Lord Nārāyaṇa. As Nārāyaṇa is called as *Ātman*, *Svayaṁ* and *A*, this god Brahmā got the names Ātmayoni, Svayambhū and Aja. On his birth, not able to behold Nārāyaṇa as it was water and water everywhere, he began penance to have the vision of Nārāyaṇa. Consequently, he saw Him having thousand arms, lying on Śeṣa, the great serpent, and accompanied with Goddess Lakṣmī. Brahmā, the first devotee of Nārāyaṇa has been entrusted by Him, with the task of world-creation and by His grace he is accomplishing this work. Hence he is not equal to this Kṛṣṇa who is none other than Lord Nārāyaṇa.

"Here is Mukhya Prāṇa, the lord of vital-airs. He is equal to Brahmā in all aspects. He is the perfect devotee of the Lord. Never does he function against the wishes of the Lord. In the next Kalpa, when the present Brahmā achieves perfect liberation, this Mukhya Prāṇa will function as Brahmā, the creator. At the time of the well-known churning of the milky ocean, as you know, there first arose the deadly poison. Most of it was first drunk by this Mukhya Prāṇa who gave little of it, having reduced its potency, to Śiva. He is also capable of bestowing liberation to his devotees as per Viṣṇu's instructions. This Mukhya Prāṇa having taken the form of Hanumān, served Viṣṇu incarnated as Rāma. Now he is serving the same Lord in this incarnation of Kṛṣṇa having himself taken the form of Bhīma. In future, he will take the form of Madhva and will accomplish tasks impossible for other gods.

"Here are Mahādeva, the son of Brahmā, Garuḍa, the lord of birds; and Śeṣa, the serpent lord. All these three are equal in knowledge, strength and bliss; and are devoted to the service of the Lord. This Mahādeva on an earlier occasion destroyed Tripura-demons; he is blessed on his head with the Ganges, born out of Viṣṇu's foot; he has been won over by Gaurī. This Śeṣa

has his tail planted on the back of Vāyudeva in the form of the great tortoise and has held on his hood the entire earth. The strength of this Garuḍa is praised even by his enemies, the serpents. On a previous occasion, he vanquished Bali and presented his crown to Lord Kṛṣṇa residing over the Gomanta-mountain. Through severe penance, this Garuḍa became the vehicle of Viṣṇu and Śeṣa became His bed.

"This is Indra who has killed demon Bala. He is the lord of gods by the grace of Viṣṇu, who bestowed on him valuable jewels arisen out of the milky ocean when it was churned. Here is Bṛhaspati, the preceptor of gods. This one is Yama. Here again is the moon; there is seen the sun; here is Varuṇa. All these are immortal by the grace of Lord Viṣṇu."

But Rukmiṇī rejected all of them and went to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, to garland him. There was a small curtain between the two held by the priests. The assembled kinsmen showered auspicious things like pieces of jaggery and cumin seeds on the bride and the bride-groom. Then Rukmiṇī garlanded Kṛṣṇa. Both of them sat on a golden seat and the women-folk blessed them with eulogistic songs. Thereafter the marriage rites were performed. On their completion Kṛṣṇa went to Dvārakā with Rukmiṇī.

Canto XVII

On reaching Dvārakā, the sages began to praise the various incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu:-

"Lord Viṣṇu is the Supreme Lord relaxing in the milky ocean on Śeṣa, the serpent-lord. He fulfils the desires of his devotees. He came down as Kapila, son of Kardama-prajāpati, lived in the hermitage of Siddhapuri and

converted the incomprehensible knowledge of supreme Reality quite easy to be grasped.. Then he became the son of Yama in his wife Mūrti and stayed at Śataśṛṅga-mountain being served by sage Nara. Again, He descended on the earth as Dattātreya, the son of Atri and Anasūyā and bestowed infinite wealth to Kārtavīryārjuna. He took the incarnation of Ṛṣabha and taught all lores to his son Bharata. This same Lord Viṣṇu took the form of Śimśumāra son of Doṣa-prajāpati and Śarvarī and delighted the parents by his wonderful deeds. He was born as Dhanvantari from the milky ocean and cured manifold diseases. He took the form of Hayagrīva, killed demon Madhu and rescued the Vedas stolen by him. He is standing on the banks of river Bhīmarathī as per the wishes of his devotee Puṇḍarika.

"This Supreme Lord gained meaningful names like Keśava, Nārāyaṇa, Mādhava, Govinda, Viṣṇu, Madhusūdana, Trivikrama, Vāmana, Śrīdhara, Hṛṣīkeśa, Padmanābha, Dāmodara, and so on. He was born as Vedavyāsa, the son of Parāśara and Satyavatī and imparted knowledge to sages like Śuka. He is blessing his dovotees standing as Kṛṣṇa at Uḍupi.

"He took the incarnation of a fish and rescued the Vedas, by destroying the acquatic demons. He entered the tortoise-body of Vāyudeva and giving a sound support to both Śeṣa and direction-elephants helped them in their onerous task of holding high the entire earth. Similarly he supported the Mandara mountain when it was used as the churning-rod while churning the milky ocean. He took the form of a boar, destroyed demon Hiraṇyākṣa and rescued the Earth carried away by him. In his incarnation of Narasiṁha, He killed demon Hiraṇyakaśipu in the most astounding manner and pleased Indra. He was born as Vāmana, the younger brother of Indra and having punished emperor Bali suitably, pleased Indra and other gods. In his incarnation as Paraśurāma he killed Kārtavīryārjuna and conquered the Kṣatriya-kings for twenty-one times. As Rāma,

son of Daśaratha, He destroyed Rāvaṇa who had carried away his beloved Sītā. In this incarnation as Kṛṣṇa, He would preach the Gīta to Arjuna and would bring prosperity to Dharmarāja. As Buddha he would deceive Tripura-demons and would impart false knowledge to the evil minded. As Kalki, He would bring about the destruction of the wicked and pave way for the Kṛta-age".

Thus singing the eulogies of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, those sages dwelt with delight in Dvārakā, the heaven-like abode of Kṛṣṇa, wherein people were living fully engaged in devotion to Him.

Canto XVIII

In this canto, Vādirāja describes the limbs of Rukmiṇī and Kṛṣṇa beginning from their feet.

The feet of Rukmiṇī and Kṛṣṇa are charming to the eyes. They shower riches over the devotees. Kṛṣṇa's feet are so sacred and holy that even Rukmiṇī adores them. His knees which were besmeared with dust while he was crawling in Gokula, wipe away all sins. His thighs give delight to his devotees and sorrow to his enemies. He fondles Mukhya Prāṇa on his lap. The same laps were the support of Hiraṇyakaśipu when he was being killed. The Vedas declare His thighs to be the source of Vaiśyas. The waists of Rukmiṇī and Kṛṣṇa are adorned by gold-coloured garments and jewels. Rukmiṇī having seated herself on the lap of Kṛṣṇa has clasped his body. Kṛṣṇa's navel is deep. From it has shot up the divine lotus, the birth-place of Brahmā, the Creator. Rukmiṇī and Kṛṣṇa are the parents of the universe. They hold in their bodies all the worlds. Kṛṣṇa's broad chest is lovely and its charm is described by the good. Rukmiṇī remains always embracing it. It is adorned with the divine Kaustubha-gem.

Kṛṣṇa's beautiful face is like the rising moon. Its beauty excels with His nectar-like smile. His neck is adorned with flower-garland. His arms are like the branches of the heavenly Pārijāta-tree. In His four hands there shine Sudarśana-wheel, Conch,Mace and Lotus. Sudarśana severes the heads of the hosts of demons. The Conch has killed millions and millions of demons by its mere sound. The Mace removes the sins of the devotees. And the Lotus causes the enemies bereft of their lotus-like faces. His sword called Nandaka is ' *Nandaka*' or pleasing only to his devotes. For his enemies it is quite the opposite. His arrows cause destruction of the enemies. Rukmiṇī has worn the *Maṅgala*-sūtra in her neck, which always bestows riches to the devotees. Their faces are shining with a gentle smile and are lovelier than the full-moon. His ears are adorned with studded ear-ornaments. His wide eyes are graceful ; gods like Śiva and others offer prayers to attract His eyes towards them. On His forehead shines the mark of *Kastūrikā* and He looks more lovely by his curly hair.

Vādirāja repeatedly prays for the grace of each and every limb of both Rukmiṇī and Kṛṣṇa.

Canto XIX

In the beginning, Vādirāja describes the limbs of Rukmiṇī. Her lovely frame is slender ; hair are long and hanging down ; arms are also long ; eyes are fickle ; the waist is almost invisible ; her breasts are plump and hard.

Lord Kṛṣṇa possessed other wives like Jāmbhavatī, Lakṣaṇā, Satyabhāmā, Nīlā, Kālindī and Mitravindā. He also married the sixteen thousand maidens who were released by him after slaying Narakāsura.

Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme God. He alone is capable of bestowing eternal liberation. He saved Śiva from the attack of Bhasmāsura. Sage Bhṛgu has advanced the conclusive evidence regarding His overall-superiority. He is the father of Brahmā, the creator, who in his turn is the father of Śiva.

After some time, Rukmiṇī conceived and gave birth to Pradyumna, the cupid incarnate. Pradyumna married Rugmavatī, the daughter of his maternal uncle Rugmī. She gave birth to Aniruddha. He married Uṣā, the daughter of Bāṇāsura and became the father of Vajra.

That Over-lord Kṛṣṇa is residing even to-day at Dvārakā with Rukmiṇī. Dvārakā yields *Dharma, Artha, Kāma,* and *Mokṣa* to Kṛṣṇa's devotes.

May that Kṛṣṇa protect us all and bestow eternal bliss.

CHAPTER IV

RUKMIṆĪŚAVIJAYA AS A MAHĀKĀVYA

रोम्णां हर्षणकारिणि श्रवणतः पापौघविध्वंसिनि
प्रेम्णा चिन्तयतां विचित्रविमलश्लाघ्यार्थसन्दायिनि ।
सञ्जाते भुवि रुक्मिणीशविजये सद्वादिराजोदिते
सञ्जातः सुरमण्डलीषु महितः सर्गोऽयमाद्यो मुदाम् ॥

Thus sings Vādirāja at the end of each canto of his *Mahākāvya*, the *Rukmiṇīśavijaya*. The meaning is clear as well as indicative of the merits of the poem . It means:-

" The poem *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* sung by Śrī Vādirāja generates horripilation to its readers. It destroys on its listening, the currents of sins. It imparts manifold, faultless and excellent meanings to the connoisseurs. When this poem descended on the earth, even gods became immensely pleased."

This is Vādirāja's estimate of his own poem and an examination of the poem reveals that the poet is not indulging in undeserving self-praise.

It is a well known fact that in Sanskrit, any long poem cannot become a *Mahākāvya* or an epic poem.[1] Sanskrit

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1. The Sanskrit term *Mahākāvya* has been translated into English differently by different scholars: (i) Ornate court-epic (Winternitz); (ii) Extended narrative poem (D.K. Gupta); (iii) Epic (A. B. Keith); (iv) Court epic (K. Krishnamoorthy); and (v) Long poem (S. K. Belvalkar).
2. काव्यालङ्कार I. 18-23
3. काव्यादर्श I.14-22
4. साहित्यदर्पण VI.315-325

rhetoricians have laid down its characteristics which need to be incorporated by the poets composing an epic poem. Among these rhetoricians. Bhāmaha[2], Daṇḍin[3] and Viśvanātha[4] are often quoted to know these characteristics. Among this triad, the first two are almost contemporaries and have many points in common. Accordingly,the characteristics of a *Mahākāvya* agreeable to both are :

(1) It should start with either a blessing or a salutation or an indication of its subject-matter which should be an exalted one, either historical or otherwise. (2) It should deal with the four goals of human life and must have, as its hero a great and generous person. (3) It must be adorned with descriptions of cities, oceans, hills, seasons, moon-rise, sun-rise, sports in gardens and in waters, drinking scenes, love-festivals, separation of lovers, their marriage, nuptials and birth of a son, consultation with ministers, sending of envoys, army-campaigns, war and hero's triumph. (4) It should be of a sizeable length and should be continuously filled with sentiments and emotions. (5) Its cantos should not be too long, should have well-formed joints and metres pleasing to the ears, and it should end in a different metre. (6) It should possess charming figures of speech. (7) The virtues of the hero should be first described and then should be described his victory over his rivals, whose qualities should also be narrated. (8) When any of these characteristics are wanting, still it does become acceptable as a *Mahākāvya*, if the structure of its parts is pleasing to the connoisseurs. (9) It should be simple, easy to understand and imparting advice to its readers.

Viśvanātha adds some more characteristics; prominent among them are : (a) Its cantos should be eight or more. (b) It should be named after the poet, or the story, or the hero, or some one else; similarly the cantos may be named after the happenings they relate. (c) A canto should generally deal with one incident

only and should hint, towards the end, the incident of the following canto.

A perusal of these various characteristics laid down by these three oft-quoted rhetoricians will make it clear that there is remarkable flexibility and no rigidity, in following these various requirements. And it should be like that. Because in the world of poesy, the poet alone is the supreme creator, preserver and destroyer[5]. He cannot be and should not be bound by any cut and dry tradition, literary or otherwise. But this should not be construed that a poet can become licentious. Both these extremities are harmful to the rise of good poetry. Any good poet possesses a single motive while composing his poem, whether long or short; and that is, fulfilling his intention of composing the poem in a way pleasing to its readers or connoisseurs. Such a poet accepts the various characteristics laid down by the rhetoricians as broad guide-lines and not as every detail sacrosanct and completely binding on him. Thus, he becomes neither a blind follower nor a rude violator of any literary tradition. He follows the middle path of accepting whatever enhances the beauty and charm of his poem having one eye on his purpose of poetising and another on the delight of connoisseurs. He accepts the precepts laid down by the rhetoricians because of

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5. Read: i) अपारे काव्यसंसारे कविरेकः प्रजापतिः ।
यथास्मै रोचते विश्वं तथैव परिवर्तते ।।
शृङ्गारी चेत्कविः काव्ये जातं रसमयं जगत् ।
स एव वीतरागश्चेन्नीरसं सर्वमेव तत् ।।
भावानचेतनानपि चेतनवच्चेतनान्यचेतनवत् ।
व्यवहारयति यथेष्टं सुकविः काव्ये स्वतन्त्रतया ।।
Ānandavardhana, ध्वन्यालोक , Ed. K.Krishnamoorthy, Karnatak University, Dharwad, 1974, P.250
ii) नियतिकृतनियमरहितां - Mammaṭa, काव्यप्रकाश, I-i

his consideration for the connoisseur. This is also acceptable to the rhetoricians who, rather than insisting on bringing in a poem all these features, stress the need of pleasing the connoisseurs[6]. This can also be seen by their not fixing the number of heroes, of cantos, of metres, of figures of speech, naming of the poem or mode of its beginning and the like. It is also true that those who followed the cut and dry literary tradition have earned censure from the critics.[7]

All this preamble should not be construed as an apology on behalf of Vādirāja for not fulfilling the requirements of a *Mahākāvya* as laid down by the rhetoricians and still claiming

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6. i) न्यूनमप्यत्र यैः कैश्चिदङ्गैः काव्यं न दुष्यति ।
यद्युपात्तेषु सम्पत्तिराराधयति तद्विदः ।। काव्यादर्श, I.20
ii) वर्णनीया यथायोग्यं साङ्गोपाङ्गा अमी इह ।
साहित्यदर्पण, VI-324
iii) सन्धिसन्ध्यङ्गघटनं रसाभिव्यक्त्यपेक्षया ।
न तु केवलया शास्त्रस्थितिसम्पादनेच्छया ।।
ध्वन्यालोक, III-12
iv) मुख्या व्यापारविषयाः सुकवीनां रसादयः ।
तेषां निबन्धने भाव्यं तैः सदैवाप्रमादिभिः ।। *Ibid.* p.164
v) वाग्वैदग्ध्यप्रधानेऽपि रस एवात्र जीवितम् ।। अग्निपुराण - 33
vi) आस्तां वस्तुषु वैदग्धी काव्ये कामपि वक्रताम् ।
प्रधानसंविधानाङ्कनाम्नापि कुरुते कविः ।।
वक्रोक्तिजीवित of Kuntaka, IV-24

7. "It is generally believed that the poems which are composed in accordance with the rules laid down in the Alankarasastra are slightly inferrior to the early poems on which the rules of the definitions were based. There is of course some truth in the assertion as the later poets were somewhat handicapped by the rules in making use of their free thinking which is essential in all forms of creative poetry". Ramaswami Shastri, Preface to his edition of *Abhinanda's Rāmacarita*, P.23

his poem to be a *Mahākāvya*. The preamble has been prefixed only to make it clear that Vādirāja as a true poet has followed the golden rule of following the golden mean. He has followed the rules laid down by the rhetoricians as many as and as much as suited to his main and only motive of singing the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa as a Dvaita poet. This motive has a two-fold purpose : singing the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa and propagating the bliss-bestowing teachings of Madhvācārya. He confesses this openly in one of the introductory stanzas :-

श्रीनाथकीर्त्यम्बुजसेव्यगन्धं प्राणः स संगृह्य विहर्तुमीष्टे ।
सोऽहं तदीयागमविस्तृतं तं वाणीमुखं वासयितुं वृणोमि ।। (I-7)

(Just as only breeze is capable to carry the fragrance of lotuses, so too the Mukhya Prāṇa alone is competent to spread far and wide a part of delightful and lotus-like glories of Lord Nārāyaṇa. Still, I have volunteered to sing those glories which have been described in his works by Śrī Madhvācārya, the incarnation of Mukhya Prāṇa, just to make my speech delightful).

And Vādirāja has been successful in achieving his purpose of singing Lord Kṛṣṇa's glories as a Dvaita poet in his *Rukmiṇīśavijaya*. He has not ignored the requirements of a *Mahākāvya* which he has brought in his epic-poem befitting to the occasion.

Thus the poem starts with a prayer to Lord Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme God. The subsequent introductory stanzas contain salutations to God Hayagrīva, Goddess Lakṣmī (Rukmiṇī), Śrī Madhvācārya, the perfect devotee of the Lord, and to goddess Sarasvatī. The subject-matter of the epic deals with the main events in the life of Kṛṣṇa the whole incarnation of Viṣṇu[8] up to his marriage with Rukmiṇī. These incidents have been borrowed from the tenth book of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, one of the sacred books of Indians.

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8. *Cf.* एते चांशकलाः पुंसः कृष्णस्तु भगवान्स्वयम् ।। भागवत , I.iii-28

As regards imparting instruction about the achievement of the four goals of human life viz. *Dharma, Artha, Kāma,* and *Mokṣa,* Vādirāja suggests very often to submit fully to his hero viz Lord Kṛṣṇa. On many occasions he has advocated devotion to Kṛṣṇa as the means to secure each and every objective in human life. In fact, the central theme of the *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* has been the advocacy of *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. On the birth of Kṛṣṇa, his parents became free from their fetters and Vādirāja remarks:

शरीरिणां स्थावरजङ्गमानां निरीक्षणेनैव विमुक्तिदोऽहम् ।
इतीव विख्यापयितुं स दृष्टो जहार पित्रोर्निगडस्य वन्धम् ।।(I-45)

(Kṛṣṇa on being seen by his parents, released them from their fetters, as if to exhibit to the world that he bestows final release to all embodied beings whether mobile or immobile, on merely having his vision).

There can be no obstacle of any kind to one who meditates on the Lord :

करे निधायाद्भुतवालमेनमभूद्बहिर्निस्सरतोऽस्य शौरेः ।
न तद्गृहद्वारगणोऽन्तरायः करस्थदेवस्य कुतोऽन्तरायः ।।(I-59)

(When Vāsudeva was carrying Kṛṣṇa the just born child, from Madhurā, the closed doors did not become obstacles. Where can there be any obstacle to him who has God in his hand or mind?[9])

Those who submit to Viṣṇu's feet and generously give gifts, get prosperity hundred times -

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9. *Cf.* "Walk with God and reach the destination" -Anon

कादम्बिन्यै वितरति पयोबिन्दुमात्रं पयोधा -
वासीद्वृद्धिः सकलसरितां स्वात्मनश्चेति युक्तम् ।
नित्यं विष्णोः पदमधिगतायात्युदाराय दाना -
दब्बिन्दूनामपि शतगुणा वृद्धिरद्धा स्ववर्गे ।। (V-34)

(It is but proper that the ocean which gave mere drops to the clouds got in return heavy rains filling itself and all the rivers. Because, always those who plant their mind in Viṣṇu's feet and become liberal donors of even water-drops, secure hundred-fold prosperity for themselves and to their kith and kin)

He bestows all the eight-fold occult powers (viz. *Aṇimā, Mahimā, Garimā, Laghimā, Prāptiḥ, Prākāmyaṁ, Īśitvaṁ* and *Vaśitvaṁ*) :-

देवेश देवेऽशनिवर्षहितौ पाताऽसि पातासितघातकल्पे ।
दावेऽष्टदावेष्टयतीह योऽभूर्मा नः समानः स निजेत्यजाद्य ।। (VIII-2)

(O Over- lord of gods, you are the giver of eight-fold occult powers. You did protect us when the rain-god invaded us with thunder and lightning, and the wild-fire surrounded us with burning flames, red like the wounds inflicted by a sword. You always protect your devotees. Hence, please do not abandon us).

The study, the audition and the meditation of Kṛṣṇa's story is never fruitless. It yields all types of *Mukti:*

स्वानन्दं प्रकटीचकार सुखदं सायुज्यमालिङ्ग्य ताः
साधर्म्यं स्वकृतानुलेपतिलकैर्मोक्षे हृदिस्थावृतेः ।
ताभिः सस्मितमीक्षितो यदुपतिः सारूप्यसार्ष्टी दिशन्
रासाख्यं च तदुत्सवं न हि कथा व्यर्था परब्रह्मणः ।। (VIII-46)

(When the cowherdesses beheld Kṛṣṇa with a beaming smile, he granted them liberation removing the veil on their

hearts and revealed his joy. Having embraced them he gave them the pleasure of *Sāyujya Mukti*, having annointed them with the perfumes applied to his body he granted them *Sādharmya Mukti*, having danced with them during the *Rāsakrīḍā*, he blessed them with both *Sārūpya*, and *Sārṣṭi Muktis*. Never is the *Kṛṣṇa-kathā* futile)

According to Vādirāja, one should not indulge in the worship of other deities leaving aside Kṛṣṇa's worship:

दुर्गावने व्रतधरं निशि नन्दगोपं सर्पोऽग्रसीत्किल बुभुक्षितचित्तवृत्तिः ।
कृष्णं विसृज्य सकलेश्वरमन्यदैवप्रत्यर्हणाभिरतमित्यहमूहयामि ।। (X-2)

(On one night a serpent bit Nanda who was engaged in the worship of goddess Durgā. I guess that the serpent bit him because of his offence of worshipping other deities, forgetting Kṛṣṇa the Over-lord of the entire universe).

This is how Akrūra beheld Kṛṣṇa sitting in his chariot:-

विश्वस्थेमलयोत्पत्तिमुक्त्यादेर्मुख्यकारणम् ।
अच्छशेषफणारत्नच्छत्रशोभितमैक्षत ।।
दृष्ट्वा तमम्भोरुहपत्रनेत्रं तुष्टाव तुष्टाखिलचित्तवृत्तिः ।
पश्चात्सिषेवे रथसंस्थितं तं मुक्तोऽपि नैवोज्झति कृष्णसेवाम् ।।

(X.70-71)

(In the waters of Yamunā, Akrūra saw Kṛṣṇa the main cause of the world's maintenance, destruction and the origin, and of the liberation (of the souls) and the like, who was shining under the umbrella in the form of bright and jewelled hood of Śeṣa. On seeing him thus in the waters, all his faculties became immensely pleased. Still he began to see at Kṛṣṇa sitting in his chariot. Because, even the liberated souls do not give up serving the Lord).

Vādirāja fancies the fight between Kṛṣṇa and Cāṇūra and that between Balarāma and Muṣṭika bringing out the supremacy of *Kṛṣṇa-Bhakti* and *Kṛṣṇa-Jñāna*:-

स्वभक्तिरिव संसारं कृष्णश्चाणूरमभ्यगात् ।
तज्ज्ञानमिव पापौघं मुष्टिकं रोहिणीसुतः ।। (XI.41)

(Kṛṣṇa attacked Cāṇūra as his devotion attacks to destroy *Saṁsāra* or soul's embodiment. Balarāma wrestled with Muṣṭika as Kṛṣṇa's knowledge meets to burn a heap of sin).

Even a king should engage himself in *Viṣṇubhakti* :

विष्णुभक्तिरतं भूपं नैव त्यक्ष्यति तत्प्रिया ।
तद्द्वेषिणि न सा स्थातुमुत्सहेत पतिव्रता ।। (XII-58)

(A king engaged in devotion of Viṣṇu is not left by His consort, Lakṣmī or Goddess of wealth. She, the chaste, is not interested in residing with Viṣṇu-haters).

The city of Dvārakā got its name not because of its having numerous doors, but because of Lord Kṛṣṇa dwelling therein, whose worship is the sure door to liberation :-

इहाखिलैश्वर्यसुभोगवृद्धेः परत्र निःश्रेयससौख्यसिद्धेः ।
महः परं द्वारमवाप्य पृथ्व्यामसौ पुरी द्वारवती बभूव ।।
(XVII-26)

(This city came to be known in the world as Dvāravatī, (Doored-one) as Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lustre, who is like the door to achieve both the pleasure of worldly enjoyment and the bliss of the other-worldly liberation, dwells in it).

Hence, this is the message of Vādirāja to the humanity, given through his advice to his mind, to achieve all the four goals of human life :-

विस्तीर्णामरशाखिरत्नभवने छत्रायिताहीश्वरे
सत्सिंहासनशोभिमूलविभवे विभ्राजमानं विभुम् ।
भृत्यैर्ब्रह्मभवादिभिः परिवृतं सद्वन्दिभिः संस्तुतं
चित्तोपास्व विलोलगोपललनानेत्रान्तसच्चामरम् ।। (IX.22)

(O mind, worship that Kṛṣṇa. He is the Overlord (living) in the jewelled mansion in the form of vast divine (Pārijāta) tree (and) shining on the bedecked throne in the form of its bottom where the serpent-lord Śeṣa serves him as an umbrella. He is surrounded by servants like Brahmā, Śiva and other gods. He is praised by (Nārada and other) bards. And he is looked at by cowherdesses with their fickle eyes, which serve the purpose of chowries).

Vādirāja's *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* thus serves the purpose of imparting the most effective means of securing all the four goals of human life as it has, as its hero, Lord Kṛṣṇa himself.

Now coming to the various descriptions of cities, oceans, hills & c., one can find that they are incorporated in the poem, not for their own sake, but as needed to narrate the various incidents effectively. As regards the description of cities, one can go through the description of Dvārakā (XVII-26-70). As shown above, its name itself is significant and uniquely meaningful. The city is so holy that all the nine-fold devotees have made it their abode:

तच्छास्त्रश्रवणोत्सवेन कतिचित्सङ्कीर्त्य संस्मृत्य तं
तत्पादाब्जनिषेवया च सुधियस्तस्यार्चया केचन ।
सख्येनाप्यपरे प्रणम्य बहुशः केचिच्च दासास्तवे -
त्यात्मानं च निवेद्य मोक्षनिरताः सन्त्यत्र कृष्णार्चकाः ।।
(XVII-47)

[Those intent on *Mokṣa* or final liberation are living here engaged in Kṛṣṇa's worship. Some are listening (*Śravaṇa*) to scriptures describing him; some are reciting (*Kīrtana*) his glories whereas some others are meditating (*Smaraṇa*) on him. Still others are resorting to his lotus-like feet (*Pādasevana*); some more are worshipping (*Arcana*) him. Others treat him as a friend (*Sakhya*). Some others bow down (*Vandana*) to him, Still others serve him as his servants (*Dāsya*). Others submit themselves (*Ātmanivedana*) to him].

Vādirāja has described the western ocean elaborately in canto XVI (51-61). The innate characteristics of the ocean are fancied poetically :-

असह्यवह्निव्यथितोऽपि वार्धिरनन्तरत्नान्युदरे पिधाय ।
न जातु पानीयमपि प्रदत्ते धनस्य लाभादधिको हि लोभः ।।

(XVI-52)

(This ocean, even though aggrieved by the unbearable submarine-fire, conceals innumerable jewels in its belly. Still it does not give even water to drink. Certainly, greed increases with the gain of wealth).

There is a fine description of Mount Govardhana in canto VI. This is an aspect of its grandeur :-

खगान् स वृष्टेर्द्रुमकोटरेषु मृगान् जुगोप स्वगुहागृहेषु ।
मुनीन्घनात्युच्छ्रितमेखलासु विपत्सु कः स्वीयमुपेक्षतेऽग्र्यः ।।

(VI-8)

(When it was raining cats and dogs, the mountain gave shelter to birds in hollows of its trees, to animals in its home-like

caves and to sages on its high and dense plateaus. Verily, noble ones do not ignore their kith and kin during calamities).

Vādirāja has described the seasons appropriately. Various phenomena of Nature are poetically described as parts of Kṛṣṇa's worship. This is how *Vasanta* or Spring serves him :-

दाक्षिण्यं प्रकटीकरोति मरुता रागं प्रवालैः पिकैः
माधुर्यं प्रियभाषणं शुकचयैर्गीतानि भृङ्गैर्मधुः ।
स्नानं सन्मधुनार्चनं च कुसुमैश्छत्रं तरुच्छायया
स्वाधीशं जनयिष्यतोऽस्य हृदयं व्यग्रं विधास्यन्निव ।। (IV-45)

(The spring is acting as if it wants to incite the mind of Kṛṣṇa who would be giving birth to Cupid, its master. It reveals its modesty by its gentle breezes, its love through tender sprouts, its sweetness through the cooing of cuckoos, its melodious speech through the words of parrots and its songs through the humming of bees. It gives him the ceremonial bath through showers of honey-drops. It worships him with flowers; and it provides him the umbrella through shades of trees).

The description of the *Grīṣma* or Summer is found in canto V (15-19). The poet fancies its effect :-

अहो निदाघोत्थभयादिवेशो बिभर्ति गङ्गां जलधौ स शेते ।
रमापतिः पङ्कजविष्टरश्च चतुर्मुखः तं विषहेत कोऽन्यः ।।
(V-15)

(As if being unable to forbear the summer-heat, Śiva is bearing Ganges on his head, Viṣṇu is relaxing in the ocean and Brahmā has made the lotus as his seat. Who else can bear it ?)

In his description of the *Varṣā* or Rainy season (V.30-35) Vādirāja imparts eternal truths fit to be followed by those who hanker after eternal bliss :-

आश्रित्य विष्णुपदमर्थिषु यच्छतोऽम्बु मेघस्य सारथिरभूज्जलनायकोऽपि ।
नित्यं मुकुन्दचरणार्पितवैभवस्य मर्त्योपकारनिरतस्य न कः सहायः ।।
(V.31)

(When the clouds resorted to *Viṣṇupada* (sky,Viṣṇu's feet) and poured water on supplicants, even the *Jalanāyaka* (ocean, worst mutt) becomes a helper. Certainly, when one submits all his wealth always at Lord's feet and engages in being benevolent to people, who does not become one's helper ?)

The *Śarat* or Autumn has been described in four long verses (V.36-39). The description is also applicable to the Dvaita Vedānta and to Madhvācarya.(See Chapter V)

The description of the *Hemanta* (Winter) and the *Śiśira* (Cold) seasons can be seen in canto V. verses 40-42.

The sixth canto contains description of the moon-rise (34-42). One verse can be illustrated :

सुवर्णसंवीतवरेन्द्रनीलसुमध्यनिष्काञ्चितकृष्णवक्षः ।
सहारमन्वेत्युदितोर्ध्वरश्मिशशाङ्कसङ्ग्यभ्रमुदारतारम् ।। (VI-37)

(On the rise of the moon, his rays shot up in the sky and stars began to shine. The sky thereby resembled Kṛṣṇa's chest adorned with a gold necklace, having an excellent sapphire in the middle).

The moon-set is described in VIII. 38.

The sun-rise has been described at many places, mainly in canto II (9-15, 22-25). Through the description of the sun-rise, Vādirāja shows the path of progress and prosperity :-

नभः स्पृशन्नुन्मुखदीप्तिवृन्दैरसौ क्रमेणोर्ध्वमियाय भास्वान् ।
तथाहि तद्विष्णुपदानुषक्तकरः कथं नोर्ध्वमुपैति लोकः ।। (II-23)

(The sun, spreading his upward rays, gradually moved high in the sky. Who does not prosper, that has employed his hands in serving Viṣṇu's feet ?) [Here there is pun on words *Viṣṇupada* (sky, Viṣṇu's feet) and *Kara*(ray,hand)].

The description of sun-set is mainly in canto VI (24-31). In one verse, the poet proves the supremacy of Fate :

स लब्धजन्मा दिशि वज्रपाणेः प्रवृद्धगात्रो गगनस्य मध्ये ।
अगाद्विनाशं द्युमणिः प्रतीच्यां विधेर्निदेशो महताऽप्यलंध्यः ।।
(VI-28)

(The sun is born in the (Eastern) direction presided over by the bearer of the thunder-blot (Indra). He grows in the infinite sky. Such bright sky-jewel perishes in the Western direction. Verily, Fate's decree cannot be transgressed even by the great !)

The sports in gardens and in waters are poetically described in canto IX. Kṛṣṇa's *Rāsakrīdā* or the dance with the cowherdesses was quite enchanting :

हृष्टरोमनिकरैर्वनसत्त्वैः दृष्टरम्यविभवो हृतचित्तैः ।
तुष्टनिर्जरगणैर्गगनस्थैः वेष्टितः स्तुतमुकुन्दचरित्रैः ।। (IX-3)

(While Kṛṣṇa was revelling in *Rāsakrīdā*,the wild beasts, with their minds fully engrossed in it, witnessed with horripilation on their bodies, its beauty and grandeur. The gods with delight assembled all around in the sky and enjoyed that marvellous sight singing Kṛṣṇa's glorious deeds).

This is how the cowherdesses sported with Kṛṣṇa in the Yamunā river :-

अभिगतिजलदानप्रेमसंश्लेषयोगात् प्रकटितकुचभागा दृश्यमानोरुदेशाः ।
कचविगलितमाल्याः सङ्गतैरङ्गरागैः सरितमपि सरागां चक्रुरासां किमन्ये ।।
(IX-35)

(During the water-sport,the cowherdesses were hurriedly approaching Kṛṣṇa throwing water towards him, and were embracing him. By this, their breasts and thighs became visible and their garlands fell from their braids. They made even the river *sarāga* (coloured, passionate) by the perfumes of their bodies. What to speak of human beings ?)

The marriage of Rukmiṇī and Kṛṣṇa being the main theme of his poem, Vādirāja has described elaborately all the events incorporated therein in cantos XV and XVI.

The birth of a son has been described in canto I (39-49) and again in canto XIX (25-32). Vādirāja guesses the reason of the whole world becoming delighted on Kṛṣṇa's birth :

अजन्मनस्तस्य हि जन्मकाले चराचरं तुष्टमभूत्किलेदम् ।
तथाहि तुष्टिर्भुवि कस्य न स्याददृष्टपूर्वस्य निरीक्षणेन ।। (I-44)

(It is said that this world comprising of mobile and immobile beings became pleased at the time of the birth of Kṛṣṇa, having no real birth. Verily, who in this world, will not become pleased on witnessing a thing unseen before ?) Rukmiṇī gave birth to Pradyumna :

मारं कुमारं सुषुवेऽथ भैष्मी शौरेर्जितारेरनुरूपरूपम् ।
प्राचीव शोचिश्शतपूरिताशं प्राचां सुवाचां विषयं निशेशम् ।।
(XIX-27)

(Then Rukmiṇī gave birth to Cupid resembling his father in beauty. It was like the East giving birth to the full moon sung by the poets).

The consultation with the ministers occurs in canto XII (40-69), where the ministers express their opinions in the royal assembly of Ugrasena. One of their advice to the King is :

चरेण यो वेत्ति रिपोर्विचारं सदा रणोपस्करणं युनक्ति ।
अगम्यभूमिः परिखादिनाऽन्यैः स एव राजा विजयी न चान्यः ।।
(XII-42)

(That king becomes victorious who gathers through his spies all plans of his enemies, always stocks the war-materials and whose fort remains inaccessible to his enemies due to deep trenches around).

Vādirāja has invented a very meaningful incident which gives a picture of the nervous mind of Kaṁsa when Kṛṣṇa broke the bow of the bow-festival (XI.17-27). In this scene, the fear personified, serves as Kṛṣṇa's envoy to Kaṁsa.

We have an impressive picture of the marching of an army (XIII. 39ff), when Jarāsandha invaded Madhurā to avenge the destruction of Kaṁsa, his son-in-law, at Kṛṣṇa's hands. This is how Jarāsandha marched :

गजैः रथौघैर्गगनं स्पृशद्भिः भटैर्हयैर्भासुरभूषणौघैः ।
जगाम जामातृपथेन तस्मै चमूममुं प्रेपयितुं धियेव ।। (XII-40)

(Jarāsandha marched against Kṛṣṇa with sky-soaring elephants, chariots, soldiers and horses bedecked with brilliant ornaments, as if he desired to send his army also along the path followed by his son-in-law).

There are many incidents of battles described by Vādirāja in his poem, like the wrestling between Kṛṣṇa and Cāṇūra and between Balarāma and Muṣṭika (canto XI), fights between Kṛṣṇa and Kaṁsa (XI), between Kṛṣṇa and Jarāsandha (XIII and XIV) and between Kṛṣṇa and Śiśupāla with his allies (XV). This is how Kṛṣṇa treated Kaṁsa who attacked him :

कोपाटोपवशेन रक्तनयनं तं खड्गचर्मोल्लस -
त्पाणिं पापमिवोत्पतन्तममतं मूर्ध्नि प्रगृह्य प्रभुः ।
पृथ्वीमेत्य निपात्य विस्तृतकचं त्रस्तं चकर्षाच्युतः
प्रेमप्राविलसाधुसङ्गनयनैः सानन्दमालोकितः ।। (XI-60)

(When Kaṁsa attacked Kṛṣṇa with reddened eyes due to anger and fury, waiving his sword and armour, Kṛṣṇa caught hold of him by his hair and felled him to the ground. Thereby his hair became dishevelled and he became quite frightened. Kṛṣṇa dragged him to and fro. This scene was witnessed by hosts of devotees with their eyes wet with delight).

The battle between Kṛṣṇa and Jarāsandha has been described by Vādirāja with punning words applicable to the debate between the adherents of the Dvaita Vedānta of Madhvācārya and their adversaries viz the Māyāvadins of the Advaita Vedānta.(See chapter V)

No soldier of Śisupala or his allies could stand before the heroism of Kṛṣṇa :

अहयीदहयी कश्चिदनंसीदपरोऽच्युतम् ।
नाक्रमीदपरो विद्धो विक्रमार्कोदये हरेः ।। (XV-5)

(When the prowess of Kṛṣṇa manifested like the sun-rise, some soldiers ran away (like darkness) leaving back their horses; others bowed down to the Lord (like devotees); still others did not advance further (like mist) being struck by Kṛṣṇa's arrows).

In all these fights and battles, we observe that Kṛṣṇa, the hero of the epic alone, is the victor.

The poem *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* is of a sizable length and has been continuously filled with various sentiments.

Regarding Vādirāja's delineation of sentiments, it can be observed that the dominant sentiment of the poem is *Śṛṅgāra* or the sentiment of love, and other sentiments have been delineated suitably as subordinate to the main sentiment. This main sentiment has been delineated in its both aspects viz. in separation and in union. The *Vipralamba-Śṛṅgāra-rasa* or the sentiment of love-in-separation, has been delineated quite impressively in cantos VII & VIII when the cowherdesses lament over the disappearance of Kṛṣṇa, in canto X when he with Akrūra leaves Vṛndāvana to visit Madhurā and in canto XIV wherein we have the letter of Rukmiṇī to him. This is a verse from the lamentations of the cowherdesses :

हे मन्दमारुत मुकुन्दपदाब्जगन्धश्रीमाननीय तमिहानय मान्यगम्यम् ।
नो चेद्बहिर्नय तवाङ्ग समानजातिं प्राणं हृदिस्थितमथार्पय कृष्णपादे ।।
(VII-37)

(O gentle breeze, you are revered as you carry the fragrance of Kṛṣṇa's lotus-like feet. Please bring him here, who is beyond the reach of the arrogant. If not, take away vital airs from our bodies and offer them at his feet).

The cowherdesses pour out their agony when Kṛṣṇa starts for Madhurā :

यियासुं त्वां समालोक्य नः प्राणोऽपि यियासति ।
युवयोरविनाभावं अक्षैरीक्षामहेऽधुना ।। (X-36)

(O Lord ! seeing you departing, our life is also departing. Now we realise directly the invariable association of you two viz. Viṣṇu and Vāyu).

This is a verse from Rukmiṇī's letter :

दिशासुनाथेक्षणमाश्रिताया मुकुन्दसौन्दर्यसमुद्रसान्द्र ।
दिशासु नाथे क्षणमाश्रिता यास्तदीयभाग्यस्य न चेच्चरन्ती ।।
(XIV-50)

(O Lord, you are the ocean of beauty; the over-lord all lives. I have resorted to you. Please show yourself to me. If not, I will wander in all directions. At least, grant me the pleasure of those blessed cowherdesses).

The sentiment of love-in-union has been delineated by Vādirāja, not only while narrating the union of Kṛṣṇa with the cowherdesses, and with Rukmiṇī, but also while describing the various seasons. The description of Summer contains this verse :

प्रियास्तनाख्यान् परिरभ्य कुम्भान् सुधां तदीयाधरजां पिबन्तः ।
विन्दन्त्यहो नागरिका न तापं न वा पिपासां गिरिकुञ्जवासाः ।। (V-18)

(The citizens living in the mountain-bushes hugged the broad and hard breasts of their beloveds and drank the nectar of their lower-lips. Thus they felt neither the searching heat nor the drying thirst).

The immense pleasure enjoyed by the cowherdesses in Kṛṣṇa's company has been described in a number of verses in cantos VIII & IX. One verse can be cited :

कृष्णांसविन्यस्तकराब्जमाला हृष्टाः स्त्रियस्ता ननृतुः सलीलाः ।
आनन्दमूर्तिं परिरभ्य मर्त्यः को नाम नो नृत्यति सिद्धकृत्यः ।। (VIII-52)

(Those ladies put garlands of their arms on his shoulders and with self-forgetting joy,danced gracefully. Which human being having secured the supreme goal by embracing the blissful Lord, will not revel and dance ?).

Vādirāja's description of Kṛṣṇa's *Rāsakrīḍā* is too enchanting and heart-absorbing with its rhythmical verses. It should be recited to realise its melody and the poet's delineation of sentiment of love-in-union generating *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. The poet himself observes :

रासोत्सवस्य हि रसं भुवि वर्णयेत्कः श्रीशाङ्गराजनिजसौभगरञ्जितस्य ।
यद्भृङ्गहंसशुककोकिलकेकिमुख्या द्रष्टुं प्रहृष्टमनसः परितः समीयुः ।।
(IX-15)

(Who in this world, can describe the grandeur and the delight of Kṛṣṇa's *Rāsakrīḍā*-festival. It was adorned with the majesty of charming moon-like Kṛṣṇa. To witness it, there assembled all around, with pleased minds, bees, swans, parrots, cuckoos, peacocks and the like).

And he prays :-

यत्ताण्डवं पक्षिमृगांघ्रिपाद्रीनुद्भूतहर्षाम्बुदृशो ह्यकार्षीत् ।
उन्नम्ररोम्णः स मदन्तरङ्गे नर्नर्तु मामीदृशमेव कुर्वन् ।।
बर्ही तर्हि ननर्त वृक्षनिचयाः पुष्पं समर्प्यार्चयन्
स्वैरं मञ्जुरवा जगुर्मधुकराः प्रैक्षन्त साक्षान्मृगाः ।
उत्क्षिप्तोच्चफणाः फणीश्वरगणाः कम्पेन यं पर्यगुः
सोऽयं श्रीरमणो मया रचितया प्रीणातु देवोऽर्चया ।।(IX-16,17)

(Kṛṣṇa's dance made birds, beasts, trees and hills shed tears of joy and caused horripilation on their bodies. May that Kṛṣṇa make me also likewise and dance in my heart.

Then the peacock danced facing Kṛṣṇa; the trees worshipped him by offering flowers; sweet-humming bees sang to their pleasure; the deer witnessed directly; and the lords of serpents surrounded him with joy raising aloft their nodding

broad hoods. May that Kṛṣṇa become pleased by my this worship in the form of the description of his *Rāsakrīḍā.*)

There are nineteen cantos in the *Rukmiṇīśavijaya*. They are neither too long nor too short. The longest canto is X with 84 verses, whereas the shortest is canto XIX with 41 verses. There are a number of metres used in the epic befitting to the incidents described. Vādirāja does not follow the norm that all the verses, except the last one or some in a canto, should be in one metre. Any critic will find that such a norm prevents the poet from composing verses in one and the same canto in various metres, when the poet is required to utilise various metres, to describe different incidents which evoke different sentiments. Indeed, the monotony of the metre many times harms the poetic charm.

A study of the *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* reveals that Vādirāja is fond of the *Śārdūlavikrīḍita* metre which has 19 syllables in a quarter. More than 300 verses have been composed in this long metre. The poem also brings out effectively Vādirāja's mastery over this metre. He handles it quite skilfully and plays with it like a tiger sporting in a forest. Every canto has verses in this metre. In a meaningful verse, Vādirāja describes Kṛṣṇa's wandering, as resembling *Śārdūlavikrīḍita* (tiger's sport, metre by that name):

तद्वृन्दावनभूगणं पदरुचा प्रागङ्कयन् सोऽसकृ-
त्पश्चात्तद्गमरुद्गणं च वरयन् कुर्वन्निवान्तर्वनम् ।
सन्ध्रास्वद्गणशोभि लेखसवयो हृद्योगणौ चाश्रयन्
लक्ष्मीशोऽनुकरोति तत्र विचरन् शार्दूलविक्रीडितम् ।। (IV-28)

(Lord Kṛṣṇa, while wandering in the Vṛndāvana, imitated the *Śārdūlavikrīḍita*. He adorned very often the ground places with the lustre of his feet. He relaxed enjoying the breezes therein. Again, by the lustre of his feet he made its interior

portions shining as if due to the brilliance of many suns. Thus, he delighted the hearts of gods and friends).

Here the words can be construed as applicable to the metre also. The metre is defined as सूर्याश्वैर्यदि मः सजौ सततगाः शार्दूलविक्रीडितम् . It consists of म (- - -) स (*u u*-), ज (u - u), स (u u-), त (- - u), त (- - u) *gaṇas* and a गुरु or a long letter. Thus it has first the मगण of the भूदेवता, then there are two सगणs of the मरुद्देवता, in between there is जगण which is सूर्यदेवताक ; then we have two तगणs which are आकाशदेवताक. All these have been made delightful by the charm of the words (पदरुचा)[10]

Here it must be noted that the description of the metre has been brought in while giving an account of Kṛṣṇa killing the Vatsāsura or the demon who had taken the form of a calf. And Kṛṣṇa is described as imitating the sport of a tiger, while killing the demon of the form of a young bull. Hence the simile is quite appropriate to the occasion.

Regarding Vādirāja's use of *alaṁkārs* or figures of speech, one can discover that even though he is a master of the various figures as laid down by Sanskrit rhetoricians, he is fond of *Utprekśā* or Poetical fancy.

Any reader of the *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* can realise that Vādirāja's style is on the whole simple and he has been successful in generating *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti* in the hearts of readers.

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10. Read : शार्दूलविक्रीडितस्यापि सुप्तिङ्न्तपदेन प्रथमं भूमिदेवताकमगणाङ्कितत्वात् उपमा ।... वृत्तमपिवायुदेवताकसगणद्वयमङ्गीकरोति ...वृत्तमपि द्वयोः सगणयोर्मध्ये सूर्यदेवताकजगणशालि ।...वृत्तमपि आकाशदेवताकतगण-द्वयशोभीति भावः ।...गणदेवतास्तु अमृतानन्दीये कथिताः । शुभदो मो भूमिमयः सो वायव्यः क्षयप्रदः जः सूर्योऽरोगदः प्रोक्तो नैश्वर्यो नाभसस्त इति ।। - Nārāyaṇācārya, *Bhāvaprakāśikā*, com. on the *Rukmiṇīśavijaya*

Vādirāja himself has spoken of good poetry more than once. According to him, poetry should please the ears,[11] it must have soft letters and should be full of various sentiments.[12] It must also possess appropriate stanzas full of meaningful and pleasing words.[13] In short, according to him poetry must please the ears by its words, the mind by its senses and the hearts with its sentiments. And a reading of the *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* reveals that he has achieved great success in all these three fields.

The account given above proving the *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* as a *Mahākāvya* also proves Vādirāja as a great poet. He is not only a poet, but also a philosopher-poet and hence has brought in a clever manner, his advocacy of the truthfulness of the doctrines of Madhvācārya's Dvaita Vedānta. Besides, he is a confirmed devotee of Hayagrīva, the incarnation of Lord Nārāyaṇa and as such has composed his great epic in a way generating deep devotion to the Lord among the hearts of his readers. Thuṣ he is great not only as a poet, but also as a philosopher and a devotee.

Still, Vādirāja is quite modest and is full of humility. He submits very humbly -

अपण्डितेनापि मयार्जितेयं मुकुन्दलीला कविकण्ठमाला ।
अकौशलेन ग्रथितेति जातिप्रसूनमालां किमु सन्त्यजन्ति ।।
अपि प्रमादागतदोपलेशामिमां कवित्वश्रियमाद्रियध्वम् ।
वुधा विदग्धैः किमुपेक्षणीया पयोब्धिजा चञ्चलताख्यदोपात् ।।
(I-9,10)

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11. श्रये हयमुखं श्राव्यकाव्यमार्गसमाप्तये ।
सरागयोगिपूगोक्तस्तोत्रतोत्रवशं महः ।। (I.3)
12. अशनिसमकठोरमल्लघातो मृदुनि हरेरफलः कलेवरेऽभूत् ।
मृदुसरसकवेः पुरः किमीड्या कठिनपदप्रियकाव्यकारशीला ।।
(XI.44)
13. काव्योचितश्लोकमपेक्षमाणा विचारयन्तीह पदे पदेऽर्थान् ।
विद्वज्जनानन्दकरान् मनोज्ञा वुधा वदान्याश्च पुरे मुरारेः ।।
(XVII.40)

(Even though I am a dullard, I have composed this poem narrating the sports of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Let this be a garland for poets' necks. Verily, do people abandon a jasmine-garland because it is woven by an unskilled florist?

Even though some defects might have entered into this poem, please receive it with due regard to the poetic merits therein. Should the Goddess of wealth be disregarded because of her weakness of fickle-mindedness?).

In fine, a critical study of the *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* shows that these two verses simply echo Kālidāsa's confession,[14] wherein that renowned great poet expresses his extreme humility always going with real greatness. Similar is the case with Vādirāja, the great poet.[15]

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14. आपरितोषाद्विदुषां न साधु मन्ये प्रयोगविज्ञानम् ।
बलवदपि शिक्षितानामात्मन्यप्रत्ययं चेतः ।। अभिज्ञानशाकुन्तलम् १-२
15. *Cf.* विद्या विनयेन शोभते ।।

Chapter V

VĀDIRĀJA, THE DVAITA POET

Vādirajā's maiden name was Varāha. It was his preceptor Vāgīśa, by whose grace he was born and to whom he was presented to be ordained to saint-hood, who had named him as Vādirāja after initiating him to ascetichood at the age of eight. The name is interpreted differently by two of his biographers :

1) *Śrī Vādirājaguruvaracaritāmṛta'* of Rāmacandrācārya :

भवताखिलवादीन्द्रदर्पहन्ता यतीश्वरः।
इत्यतो वादिराजाख्यां लम्भितः सद्गुरूत्तमैः ।।
रञ्जनाद्गुरुषूच्चत्वाद् गुरुराडिति चेरितः ।। II.9-10

("This foremost monk will destroy the pride of all leading adversaries." Due to this fact he was named by his revered preceptor as 'Vādirāja'; Similarly as he will delight one and all, and will be the best among the preceptors he was also called as 'Gururāṭ')

2) *Śrī Vādirājaguṇaratnamālā* of Ṣaṭpurācārya :-

वादीभमृगराजो यद्राजा यत्तत्त्वादिनः ।
ज्ञानकारणशास्त्रस्य राजनं वा यतो भवेत् ।। IV.43

('Vādirāja' means - he is a lion to the elephants in the form of adversaries; he is the king of philiosophers; or due to him light will be on the scriptures causing true knowledge).

Certainly, all these meainings are squarely applicable to Vādirāja. He had robbed away the pride of his

disputantas. He has been even today a moon in delighting the hearts of his devotees. He was foremost among great teachers. Whenever his opponents tried to attack as intoxicated elephants, he played the role of an infuriated lion and tore open their temples leading to their end. He was crowned as king among philosophers. Through his manifold compositions he has thrown bright light on the scriptures and has thus revealed the true knowledge to the benefit of the entire humanity.

But, the mission of his life and the role played by him in the human incarnation has been succinctly pointed out by Vādirāja himself in the meaning of his name as understood by him. He explains it in his commentary *Bhāvaprakāśikā* on Madhvācārya's *Mahābhāratatātparyanirṇaya* :-

वादी मध्वो यस्य राजा सोऽहं तस्य कृपाबलात् ।
वादिराजो न स्वशक्त्या वीणेव रणयामि तत् ।। I.4.

(Vādī is Śrī Madhvācārya; he is my Rājā or king; thus I am 'Vādirāja' or one who has Madhva as his king. I function owing to the strength of his merciful grace, and not due to my own might. It is like any lute which resounds not due to its own strength but due to the skill of the lutist)

This is a categorical confession of Vādirāja himself and it would be worthwhile to judge him as, a Dvaita bard in his poem *'Rukmiṇīśavijaya'*. Vādirāja's *'Rukmiṇīśavijaya'* opens with ten introductory verses, two among them containing eulogies of Madhvācārya :

सत्सङ्घमानससरोवरमध्यवर्ती
कृष्णाङ्घ्रिचारुकमलार्पितचित्तवृत्तिः ।
शास्त्रातिमञ्जुपदरञ्जितरम्यसंस -
दास्माकहृत्सरसिजेऽस्तु स मध्वहंसः ।। I.5.

श्रीनाथकीर्त्यम्बुजसेव्यगन्धं प्राणः स संगृह्य विहर्तुमीष्टे ।
सोऽहं तदीयागमविस्तृतं तद्वाणीमुखं वासयितुं वृणोमि ।। I.7.

In the formert verse, (I.5) Madhvācārya has been fancied as the sacred bird, swan, residing in the Mānasa lake which is fond of lotus-flowers and which produces sweet notes. Vādirāja eulogises that Madhvācārya occupies the central place among the virtuous people, that he has completely surrendered his mind to the feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and that he has delighted the assemblies of philosophers by his convinicing and pleasing expositions of True philosophy. Vādirāja prays "Let Śrī Madhvācārya reside in my heart". In the second verse (I.7), he points out the difference between himself and Madhvācārya. He observes that the great preceptor who is an incarnation of God Vāyu has the ability to grasp the qualities of God Viṣṇu and revel in them by propagating them. Vādirāja is conscious that he does not have those capacities. Hence he has desired to purify himself by uttering the tenets established by Madhvācārya. But it must be noted that Vādirāja does *not preach* Dvaita-Vedānta through his poem[1] As he expresses, his main purpose is to

1. Compare Aśvaghoṣa who composed two poems viz *Saundarananda* and *Buddhacarita* only to preach Buddhism. He expressly states :-

इत्येषा व्युपशान्तये न रतये मोक्षार्थगर्भाकृतिः
श्रोतृणां ग्रहणार्थमन्यमनसां काव्योपचारात्कृता ।
यन्मोक्षात्कृतमन्यदत्र हि मया तत्काव्यधर्मात्कृतं
पातुं तिक्तमिवौषधं मधुयुतं हृद्यं कथं स्यादिति ॥
प्रायेणालोक्य लोकं विषयरतिपरं मोक्षात्प्रतिहतं
काव्यव्याजेन तत्त्वं कथितमिह मया मोक्षः परमिति ।
तद्बुध्वा शामिकं यत्तदवहितमितो ग्राह्यं न ललितं
पांसुभ्यो धातुजेभ्यो नियतमुपकरं चामीकरमिति ॥

Saundarananda. XVIII. 63-64

(Last two verses)

narrate the story of Lord Kṛṣṇa (हरेः कथां शंसति वादिगजः ।। I.8). Incidentally, he utilises the opportunities provided by the subjecr-matter of the poem, to highlight and vindicate the tenets of the Dvaita-Vedānta. Thus he does not turn a preacher overpowering the poet in him. He remains a poet; his work is a great poem; still it can be studied to understand some aspects of the Dvaita philosophy, a fact which has been a merit of the poem.

Of course, on some occasions he has directly declared the superiority of the Dvaita-Vedānta. For example, after defending the explanation given by Madhvācārya of the incident of the *Pūtanā-vadha* or Kṛṣṇa's killing Pūtanā, Vādirāja declares :-

आनन्दतीर्थमतमुज्झितदोपजातं स्वानन्ददायि
शिथिलीकृतमत्तमायि ।

मानौघशोभि मम दुर्जनपुञ्जतोऽभीर्येनदुशा
मतिरभूत्कवितोल्लसद्भूः ।। II.60.

Through this verse, he asserts that the Dvaita-Vedānta of Ānandatīrtha or Madhvācārya is without any blemishes; it bestows bliss to the souls ; it defeats the haughty Advaitins; and it is adorned with valid evidences. He confesses : "By following this Vedānta only, I have been non-fearing to the wicked and have become inspired to compose this poem."

One of the methods adopted by Vādirāja to suggest and defend the superiority of Dvaita-Vedānta is that while referring to it he calls it *Sat-śāstra* (सत्-शास्त्र) or True

philosophy.[2] In canto V by making use of *Śleṣa* or pun,he describes the merits of this True philosophy in four verses, in the guise of describing the grandeur of the Autumnal season and its wind :-

साधूनां वरमानसाकृति सरः संशोधयत्तन्मुखप्रख्यं पद्मचयं
प्रहर्षयदलं पङ्कं संखण्डयत् ।
हृद्योमेव घनापिधानरहितं कुर्वन्नभः संहरत्तामिश्रं
हरिवीर्यकीर्तिसदृशौ सूर्योडुपौ स्पष्टयत् ।।३६।।
संसाराख्यमभेद्यबन्धनमिव प्रावृट्कृतं बन्धनं भिक्षूणां
वणिजामधःकृतजलं विच्छेदयन्मोदयत् ।
मोक्षानन्दमहाप्रवाहतुलनैः गोक्षीरपानैः जनान् सच्छास्त्र-
प्रतिकृत्यलक्ष्यत शरत्साम्राज्यमुज्जृम्भितम् ।।३७।।
पद्मासेव्यगुणौघविस्तृतकरः स्पष्टीभवत् शारदानन्दः
कम्पितभोगिराजशिरसा मान्यागमः सन्ततम् ।
सन्मार्गाश्रितपङ्कशोषणकरः सत्पान्थधर्मापहो नित्यं
विष्णुपदाश्रयः परिलसत्पुण्याम्बुपूतोऽसकृत् । ३८।।
रामायोगिजनस्य भीमचरितः सद्वंशजातं मुहुः
प्रेमालम्बनशब्दहृद्यवदनं कुर्वन् स्वकीयागमैः ।
सुक्षेमं सुमनश्च यस्य विदधत्सुव्याप्तमूर्तिः क्षितौ
सच्छास्त्रे सुखतीर्थवन्मरुदभून् मूर्धाभिषिक्तस्तदा ।।३९।।

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2. It is pertinent to note that Madhvācārya himself has called his Dvaita-Vedānta as *Sat-Siddhānta* and *Sat-Śāstra* :

सत्सिद्धान्तानुसारेण निर्णयज्ञात्समाचरेत् ।। (1272)
अभावे निर्णयज्ञस्य **सच्छास्त्रा**ण्येव सर्वदा ।। (1273)
ब्रूयादपि च शिष्येभ्यः **सत्सिद्धान्त**महापयन् ।। (1275)
एतदेव च **सच्छास्त्रं** दुःशास्त्रं तु ततः परम् ।
सच्छास्त्रमभ्यसेन्नित्यं दुःशास्त्रं तु परित्यजेत् ।। (1288)
- अनुव्याख्यान ,३-३-५

In verses 36-37, Vādirāja brings out the resemblance between the grandeur of the autumn and the Dvaita-Vedānta designating it as *Sat Śāstra.* The autumn cleans the waters of the lakes; the Dvaita-Vedānta purifies the minds of the virtuous. That makes the lotus blossom; this brightens the lustre of its followers. That dries up and destroys the mud caused by rains; this drives away completely the sin. That makes the sky clear of clouds; this causes the direct vision of the God. That removes darkness and helps both the sun and the moon to shine brilliantly; this removes ignorance and helps to have real knowledge of the greatness and prowess of Lord Viṣṇu. That removes, by decreasing the water-levels of the rivers, obstructions caused by the rainy season in the movement of the mendicants and the merchants; this removes the ordinarily unbreakable bondage of the mundane world by driving away ignorance. The season makes the milch-cattle yield abundant milk and thus brings joy to people at large. This philosophy renders possible the eternal bliss of final liberation.

In verses 38-39, Vādirāja high-lights the similarity between the autumnal wind and Madhvācārya. The wind is heartily appreciated in the world; he is held in high esteem among true philosophers. It spreads the delightful fragrance of the lotuses; he propagates bliss-yielding qualities of God worthy to be worshipped by Goddess Lakṣmī. It displays the joys of the season; he pleases goddess Sarasvatī. Its arrival is welcomed by even kings; his philosophy is honoured even by serpent-lord Śeṣa. It dries up the mud on the roads of the travellers; he removes the ignorance of those who follow the path laid down by scriptures. It dries up the sweat of good travellers; he removes the wordly irritants tormenting the followers of the path leading to liberation. It always rests in the sky; he always resorts to Lord Viṣṇu's feet. It is often purified by the waters of the Ganges; he is always pure due

to virtues. It is frightening to separated lovers; he is terrible to non-devotees of the Lord. Due to its blowing, it makes the bamboos produce through their holes melodious music; he through his teachings, makes pople born in noble families utter enchantic words. It caters to the well-being of flowers; he brings about the welfare of gods. It has spread far and wide; he is well known throughout the universe.

Another method adopted by Vādirāja is that of introducing doctrines of Dvaita-Vedānta while interpreting some of the incidents of the *Bhāgavata*, which is the source for the story of the poem. The *Bhāgavata* says that Mother Earh was tormented unbearably and she approached for help god Brahmā, the Creator. But as he was unable to help her, he took her together with other gods to God Viṣṇu beseeching his help. This incident is described by Vādirāja as follows (I.14) :-

विरिञ्चिवैरिञ्चिमुखामरेशाः स्वपारतन्त्र्यं भुवि दर्शयन्तः।
हरिं धराकार्यकृते गृणन्तः पुरान्निरीयुर्हृदि तं स्मरन्तः ॥

Here, Vādirāja points out that they all approached Viṣṇu showing thereby that all of them are not independent, but are dependent on Him and He dwells in their hearts. This fact that Viṣṇu alone is independent and all else is dependent upon Him and that He is the indweller of all beings, is one of the salient doctrines of the Dvaita-Vedānta.

Another noteworthy doctrine of Madhvācārya is the gradation among the souls. In this gradation, Lord Viṣṇu is the supermost, then comes His consort Lakṣmī and inferior to her is god Brahmā. While describing the incident of Viṣṇu assuring help to Mother Earth, Vādirāja says that He was visible to Goddess Lakṣmī, but not to god Brhmā and that, thereby, He demonstrated the gradation among them (I.24):

देवेषु धाता प्रभुरस्य लक्ष्मीस्तस्याः प्रभुः सोऽहमितीव शंसन् ।
आज्ञामजस्यैव ददावदृश्यो विज्ञेयमूर्तिः स्फुटमिन्दिरायाः ।।

Herein, Vādirāja asserts that god Brahmā is the lord of gods; but he is not the supermost. Goddess Lakṣmī is over this Brahmā: and she has Viṣṇu as her Lord. Thus Viṣṇu is the supermost God.

Madhvācārya has revealed the fact that all activities of this entire universe are under the control of Lord Viṣṇu. While describing the effect of Kṛṣṇa's playing on His flute, Vādirāja highlights His complete control over the universe (VI.47) :-

हृद्गं हृद्यनुरञ्जयन्सवयसः संहर्षयन्कर्षयन्
गोपस्त्रीहृदयं पशूनृषिगणान् निश्चेष्टयन् स्पष्टयन् ।
विश्वं स्वस्य वशं वियद्गृहवधूस्सम्मूर्छयंश्चारणान्
सिद्धान्सन्त्रपयन् सुरान्विनिमयन् वेणुं पुपोषाच्युतः ।।

It means : When Kṛṣṇa played on his flute those souls living in his heart became delighted there itself. Thereby he pleased his friends. He attracted the hearts of the *gopīs* or cowherdesses, his ardent devotees. Cows and sages remained still and calm. The goddesses in the sky became stupefied. The divine singers and Siddhas, on seeing his superiority in music, bent down their heads in shame. The gods became obedient to him. Thus Vādirāja concludes that Kṛṣṇa played on his flute making it clear that the entire universe is under his control !

Another doctrine of Madhvācārya's Dvaita-Vedānta is that Lord Viṣṇu can be known only by means of scriptures and not through one's own eyes and other sense-organs.

Vādirāja takes advantage of the incident of Indra's ordering the clouds to pour down heavily on the Gokula to show his anger towards Kṛṣṇa. While commenting on this incident, Vādirāja asks (V.56):-

सहस्रनेत्रोऽपि स कृष्णसत्त्वं मनागविज्ञाय दिदेश मेघान् ।
प्रवर्षणार्थं निगमैकवेद्ये किमक्षिवाहुल्यमुपैति कृत्यम् ।।

It means : What is the use of one thousand eyes of Indra ? They cannot preceive the Lord and hence fail to understand Him and His prowess. Because He can be known only by means of scriptures.

Madhvācārya asserts that the vision of Viṣṇu delivers final liberation. While narrating the birth of Kṛṣṇa, Vādirāja highlights this tenet (I.45) :-

शरीरिणां स्थावरजङ्गमानां निरीक्षणेनैव विमुक्तिदोऽहम् ।
इतीव विख्यापयितुं स दृष्टो जहार पित्रोर्निगडस्य वन्धम् ।।

Here Vādirāja remarks that when Kṛṣṇa was seen by his parents their fetters fell down and they too became free. Thus, he demonstrated that He bestows final release to all embodied beings whether mobile or immobile, on merely having his vision.

Another unique doctrine of the Dvaita-Vedānta is that liberation by itself does not yield the desired bliss. One must continue one's *Bhakti* or devotion even after being liberated; because by that devotion only, God Viṣṇu bestows bliss to the liberated souls. This doctrine is mentioned by Vādirāja while describing Akrūra's witnessing the image of Kṛṣṇa in the waters of river Yamunā on his way to Madhurā (X.71):-

दृष्ट्वा तमम्भोरुहपत्रनेत्रं तुष्टाव तुष्टाखिलचित्तवृत्तिः ।
पश्चात्सिषेवे रथसंस्थितं तं मुक्तोऽपि नैवोज्झति कृष्णसेवाम् ।।

He says : "Akrūra became extremely delighted on seeing Kṛṣṇa's charming image in the river. Then he beheld Lord Kṛṣṇa sitting in the chariot. Even the liberated beings do not abandon serving Kṛṣṇa."

The *Bhāgavata* narrates the incident of two divine beings by name Nalakūbara and Maṇigrīva taking the birth of two trees due to a curse; therafter the two trees were uprooted by child Kṛṣṇa who had been bound to a mortar by his mother to prevent his movements. While describing this incident, Vādirāja infers that Kṛṣṇa uprooted those trees named Arjuna, to make Arjuna the middle of the Pāṇḍavas as the sole Arjuna in this universe. Why ? Because, Arjuna happens to be the younger brother of Bhīma who is the most loyal servant of the Lord. (IV.14) :-

स्वभृत्यभीमानुजमद्वितीयं प्रियं विधित्सुः दययैव देवः ।
स भूरुहावर्जुनसंज्ञितौ तौ बभञ्ज कञ्जायतमञ्जुनेत्रः ।।

Vādirāja as a poet has revealed his mastery over the *Śabdālaṅkāras* and while doing so has also brought to light some of the doctrines of the Dvaita-Vedānta. Madhvācārya has proved the *Viṣṇu-sarvottamatva* or the Over-all Supremacy of Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa and also the *Jagat-satyatva* or the reality of this world. The eighth canto of the poem is devoted to depict the lamentations of the *gopikās*, after Kṛṣṇa disappeared from their sight; and in their descriptions of Kṛṣṇa, Vādirāja has skilfully introduced these Dvaita doctrines.

As an example, four stanzas (30-33) of the same VIII canto can be illustrated :-

निगमोऽस्ति ते मतिमतोऽतिमतो निखिलेश्वरत्वसमयेऽसम ये।
तमपि त्यजन्त्यसुभृतः सुभृतः स्वनयः कुतोऽक्षरहितैरहितैः ।। ३० ।।

अनृतं जगत्कलयतेऽलयते यदि कोऽपि मानसहितं स हितम्।
रुचिरं कथं निजनये जनयेन्नहि रज्वहेः क्षतिरभूतिरभूत् ।।३१।।

भयहेतुतास्य न च कम्पकतोभयहेतुतास्य चित एव परम् ।
न हि चिद्गतेऽर्थमहिमा निशि तानहिचिद्गतेऽर्थे इह राति हि तान् ।।३२।।

यदि भेदशून्यमखिलं मखिलंघ्यसुरार्दिता सुरसभार सभा।
तव धाम किं मुररिपोऽररिपो स्तुतिरप्युदारचरिताचरिता।।३३।।

The *Yamaka*, one of the *Śabdālaṅkāras* contained in these verses is quite clear. The word-arrangement is as follows :-

असम ते तिखिलेश्वरत्वसमये मतिमतः अतिमतः निगमः अस्ति।
ये असुभृतः तं अपि त्यजन्ति अक्षरहितैः अहितैः स्वनयः कुतः
सुभृतः ।।३०।।

अलयः कः अपि मानसहितं ते जगत् अनृतं यदि कलयते सः
निजनये हितं रुचिरं कथं जनयेत्?रज्वहेः अभूतिः क्षतिः न
अभूत् हि ।।३१।।

अस्य भयहेतुता कम्पकता च न । अस्य चितः एव परं
उभयहेतुता । निशि चिद्गते अर्थमहिमा तान् राति हि ।
इह अर्थे गते अहिचित् तान् राति हि ।।३२।।

अररिपो, उदारचरित, मुररिपो, अखिल भेदशून्ये यदि
मखिलङ्घ्यसुरार्दिता सभा । सुरसभा तव धाम किं आर ।
स्तुतिः अपि किं आचरिता ।।३३।।

In verse 30, it is stated that Kṛṣṇa is *Asama* or not equal i.e., superior to all others and to prove it there are scriptural statements which are acceptable to the intelligent. But if there are any human beings (*asu-bhṛtaḥ*) who deny the authority to these statements (like *Eṣah sarveśvarah* & c) which declare Kṛṣṇa's supremacy, that would mean that they

have no eyes to see them (*akṣa-rahita*). Then how can such adversaries (*a-hita*) (i.e., Advaitins) prove their tenets (*sva-nayah*) ; because they take the help of the same scriptures to prove their assertions. So they have to accept the authority of the scriptures and also the supremacy of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

In verse 31, there is advanced an argument to establish the reality of the world which is denied by the Advaitins who give the illustration of the illusion of the rope-serpent to prove the falsity of the world. Here Kṛṣṇa is addressed as *A-laya* or one having no destruction. And it is said that the world belongs to him (*te jagat*) i.e., it is under his control and there are authorities to prove its reality (*Māna-sahitaṁ*). If any body desires to state it as false, then he will have to admit everything connected with his doctrines to be false and then he will be unable to prove his concept like identity between Brahman and the soul. If his identity-concept is also false, then it will be in-effective like the illusory rope-serpent, which does not and cannot bite and kill.

The same argument is continued in verse 32. The Advaitins contend that it is not true that the illusory rope-serpent is completely ineffective. They say that it generates fear and tremor in the onlooker and thus it is effective. In this verse, Vādirāja contradicts this assertion of the Advaitins. He shows that the illusory rope-serpent cannot generate fear and tremor. Of course, it is true that there do originate both fear and termor on the onlooker. But Vādirāja points out that these are not caused by the illusory rope-serpent; but they are caused by the knowledge of the real serpent only. For example, during night when one is sleeping (*cid-gate*), the potency of the object (the serpent) (*artha-mahimā*) does not produce them i.e., fear and tremor. On the other hand in the place of the illusory rope-serpent (*iha*), even though the object (the serpent) disappears, the

knowledge of the serpent (*ahi-cid*) does produce fear and tremor. Thus it is proved that the cause of fear and tremor is not the illusory rope-serpent, but the knowledge of the real serpent.

In verse 33, the identity-concept of the Advaitins is refuted. Here Kṛṣṇa is addressed as *Ara-ripu* i.e. One who does not possess any *doṣas* or demerits, and as *Udāracarita* i.e., One whose actions are excellent. He is also *Mura-ripu* or, One who killed demon Mura. Vādirāja asks - "If, as Advaitins argue, there is no difference in this world among souls or if all souls are equal in their potency and calibre, how is it that the hordes of deities like Brahmā and others approach Viṣṇu alone, whenever performance of sacrifices is disturbed by demons ? If all are equal, they should possess the strength of Viṣṇu and they should themselves destroy the demons and there should never arise any occasion for them to approach Viṣṇu in the milky-ocean and praise Him to please Him and get His help."

Thus, these verses show how Vādirāja suggests the Dvaita doctrines even while he is composing charming *Śabdālaṅkāras*. Many more such verses can be illustrated. Here is a verse which contains both *Śabdālaṅkāra* (*Yamaka*) and *Arthālaṅkāra* (*Paramparita rūpaka*), where Madhvācārya is mentioned with reverence (IX.12):

पुण्डरीकमुखमुख्यविकासः खण्डिताखिलतिमिरोरुतराशः ।
शौण्डमध्वकविवर्यविलासः पाण्डुरङ्गविभ्र ललास ॥

This is the description of the sun-rise and here the sun is identified wih God Pāṇḍuraṅga, the favourite deity of Vādirāja. The verse means :-

"Due to the sun-rise lotuses blossomed, the directions became clear by the destruction of darkness and that scene

was described by skilful poets. So too, when Pāṇḍuraṅga manifested Himself, His devotee Puṇḍarīka became immensely pleased, the wishes and ambitions of all rival demons got destroyed and this Supreme Deity was praised by the wise Madhvācārya."

Canto XIII of the poem contains the attack of Jarāsandha on Madhurā and Kṛṣṇa's fight against him culminating in his defeat. This incident of the battle between Kṛṣṇa and Jarāsandha has been used by Vādirāja as Madhvācārya's victory over his adversaries viz. the Advaitins. Here Vādirāja makes use of pun and his verses can be interpreted in two ways. For example, the following verse (XIII.43) can be interpreted to apply to the army of Jarāsandha and to the Advaitins :-

वाध्यां तां सह निश्चलार्थनिकरैः क्रुद्धाः खला
निर्गुणागारमन्तरहो विधातुममता यत्नं वितेनुः किल ।
कृष्णेनापि समुज्झितां समयिनो युक्त्यात्मपक्षेऽ
ञ्जसा कृत्वैक्यं समयोजयन् गतभया दुर्भाप्यपुञ्जैरपि ॥

Here the *anvaya* or syntax is :

समयिनः गतभयाः क्रुद्धाः खलाः अमताः युक्त्या आत्मपक्षे अञ्जसा ऐक्यं कृत्वा तां निश्चलार्थनिकरैः सह वाध्यां अन्तः निर्गुणागारां कृष्णेन समुज्झितां विधातुं यत्नं अपि वितेनुः किल । अहो दुर्भाप्यपुञ्जैः अपि योजितवन्तः ।

And the words have two-fold meaning :-

One meaning applies to Jarāsandha's soldiers : "The wicked soldiers of Jarāsandha having hinted at each other, having no fear and becoming angry, by means of expediences like *sāma, dāna* &c brought about perfect unity among themselves. And they even attempted to destroy the towers and the like in Madhurā, to reduce the mansions therein lustreless and drive

away Kṛṣṇa from it. Alas ! They even used harsh words like 'Kill' 'Destroy' and others."

Another meaning applies to the Advaitins : "The adversaries with their evil principles, fearlessly and angrily argued with the help of inference regarding complete identity between Brahman and the individual soul. They attempted to advocate that by their bold interpretation, the meaning of the Upaniṣads becomes sublated, that the inner sense of the Upaniṣads establishes attributeless Brahman and that they do not describe Lord Viṣṇu. Alas ! even they composed misleading commentaries".

This is how Vādirāja describes the two quivers which approched Kṛṣṇa (XIII.48).

कृष्णश्रैष्ठ्यसमर्थनेऽतिचतुरैस्तद्भिन्नलोके भिदां ।
नित्यं साधयितुं क्षमैर्मतिमतामप्यच्छेद्यहृद्यात्मभिः ।
विख्यातैः शरसञ्चयैः सुरुचिरं प्राप्तं निषङ्गद्वयं,
भास्वन्मानसहस्रभाष्यसदनुव्याख्यानकल्पं सदा ।।

Here also there are two meanings one referring to the quivers and another to the two commentaries viz. '*Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*' and '*Anuvyākhyāna*' composed by Madhvācārya on the '*BRAHMASŪTRAS*' :

"Then two quivers came to Kṛṣṇa. They were skilled in proving His superior might and were capable of bringing about destruction among his adversaries. They were bristling with heaps of arrows, well known for possessing form charming and unpierceable for even skilled soldiers. The quivers were like two commentaries on the '*Brahmasūtras*' viz. '*Bhāṣya*' and '*Anuvyākhyāna*' which are competent to establish the supremacy of Viṣṇu, which are capable of proving difference in the world, which is different from Him, and which

are bristling with authorities very convincing and irrefutable even by the intelligent".

There are many such verses in Canto XIII. In Canto XIV, Vādirāja describes the miserable plight of Jarāsandha's soldiers and thereby states that they showed the three-fold nature of the souls advocated by Madhvācārya. The verse runs as follows : (XIV.29)

पादाब्जे स्वमनीनमन्कतिपये मूर्धानमात्मेशितुः
शाङ्र्गान्मुक्तशरैर्विशीर्णतनवः केप्यात्मनोऽमीमरन् ।
अन्ये केऽपि हरिं जरासुतमपि त्यक्त्वा ततोऽदुद्रुवु-
र्जीवानां त्रितयेन सञ्चितदशां सन्दर्शयन्तो युधि ।।

Here, Vādirāja says that some soldiers of Jarāsandha bowed down their heads at the feet of Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of all. Some other soldiers caused their own death by getting themselves split into pieces by Kṛṣṇa's arrows. Others ran away from the battle-field leaving behind both Kṛṣṇa and Jarāsandha and thus Jarāsandha's soldiers showed the three-fold nature of the souls viz. *Mukti-yogyas* (eligible to attain liberation). *Nitya-saṁsārins* (eternally in the worldly bondage) and *Tamo-yogyas* (fit for the hell).

In the same canto, there occurs the letter written, by Rukmiṇī to Kṛṣṇa and therein she being Lakṣmī narrated her relation to other deities which is propagated by Madhvācārya (XIV. 43) :-

शम्भुः पुत्रसमः स मे, पुररिपुः पौत्रः, शशी सोदरः,
सिन्धुर्मे जनकायितो, मधुसखा मत्सूनुकल्पः प्रभो ।
अम्बाहं सकलस्य चेति कमला कृष्णैकलग्नं मनो-
भृङ्गं दर्शयितुं कृतोग्रशपथा स्वं रूपमस्पष्टयत् ।।

It means "Śambhu or Brahmā is like my son : Śiva, the destroyer of the three cities is my grand-son. The moon is

my brother. The ocean is like my father. The cupid is like my son. I am Lakṣmī, the mother of all". Thus she clearly manifested her real nature of having made the determination of concentrating her mind on Kṛṣṇa alone.

Thus, we observe that Vādirāja covertly and overtly highlights the tenets of Madhvācārya's Dvaita Philosophy in his *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* as a consequence of which the great poem has become worthy of being studied for its poetic merits as well as for its philosophical teachings. This has made Vādirāja to be ranked among the *Mahākavis* or great poets of Sanskrit, a rank which he richly deserves.

CHAPTER VI

VĀDIRĀJA AS AN ETYMOLOGIST

नामानि सर्वाणि यमाविशन्ति

तं वै विष्णुं परममुदाहरन्ति ।। –भाल्लवेयश्रुतिः

-Madhvācārya, *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, I-i-I

Etymology is the science or investigation of the derivation and original significance of words. This science is designated as *Nirukta* and has been enumerated by Indian thinkers as one of the *Vedāṅgas* or aids to know the meaning of the Vedas[1]. Yāska's *Nirukta* is the well known work in this

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1) The *Vedāṅgas* are six in number viz. 1) शिक्षा the science of pronunciation, 2) छन्दस् prosody, 3) व्याकरण grammar, 4) निरुक्त etymology, 5) ज्योतिष astrology, and 6) कल्प the science of ceremonials.Read :

(1) शिक्षा व्याकरणं छन्दो निरुक्तं ज्योतिषं तथा ।
कल्पश्चेति षडङ्गानि वेदस्याहुर्मनीषिणः ।। - अमरकोश

(2) छन्दः पादौ तु वेदस्य हस्तौ कल्पोऽथ पठ्यते ।
ज्योतिषामयनं चक्षुः निरुक्तं श्रोत्रमुच्यते ।।
शिक्षा घ्राणं तु वेदस्य मुखं व्याकरणं स्मृतम् ।
तस्मात्साङ्गमधीत्यैव ब्रह्मलोके महीयते ।। पाणिनीयशिक्षा

As regards the importance of the science of etymology, Durgācārya in his commentary on the *Nirukta* of Yāska observes that it is premier among the *Vedāṅgas* as it helps one to understand the meaning. Read :

प्रधानं चेदं इतरेभ्योऽङ्गेभ्यः सर्वशास्त्रेभ्यश्च अर्थपरिज्ञानाभिनिवेशात् ।
अर्थो हि प्रधानं तद्गुणः शब्दः स चेतरेषु व्याकरणादिषु चिन्त्यते ।
यथा शब्दलक्षणपरिज्ञानं सर्वशास्त्रेषु व्याकरणादेवं शब्दार्थनिर्वचनपरिज्ञानं निरुक्तात् ।।

branch and it has been considered to be the first attempt at interpreting the Vedas. It contains mostly philological explanation of difficult words, selected from the Vedas. According to Yāska, "*Nāmāni ākhyāta-jāni*" or all nouns origin from the roots of verbs (*ākhyāta*). It means that the meaning of a noun is derived from the meaning of a root from which it is derived. This famous finding of Yāska can be modified slightly to discover the opinion of Vādirāja about the meaning of the nouns and that is : *Nāmāni ākhyāna-jāni*, where the term *ākhyāna* means a differentiating property.[2] And according to Vādirāja, what greater property can there be in a thing or a being denoted by a noun, than its or his relation or connection with the Supreme God, Lord Nārāyaṇa, the Overlord of this entire universe. Personally, Vādirāja is a confirmed devotee of the Lord. As a poet, he is the bard of Lord Kṛṣṇa. And as an etymologist, in his opinion everything is connected with Kṛṣṇa, who is like the pivot around which this entire universe revolves. So in his *Rukmiṇīśavijaya*, he gives the connotation of the names and words denoting several beings and things highlighting their connection with Kṛṣṇa and thereby brings forth Kṛṣṇa's greatness, over-lordship, majesty, and other supreme qualities. These connotations and derivations are not only charming because of the poetic elements, but are also telling of the salient incidents in their lives.

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2. Yāska also seems to approve this view regarding nouns when he opines :

> यथो एतद्यथा चापि प्रतीतार्थानि स्युस्तथैनान्याचक्षी-
> रन्निति सन्त्यल्पप्रयोगाः कृतोऽप्यैकपदिका यथा
> व्रततिर्दमूना जाट्य आट्णारो जगल्को दर्विहोमीति ।

"As to (the point) that substantives should be named in such a away that their meanings may be indubitable, (we reply that) there are words (of that character), words of rare occurence, i.e., single words formed by primary suffixes, a creeper, guest, one having matted locks, a wanderer, wakeful, one who sacrifices with a ladle, &c" (Trans. by L.Sarup)

Vādirāja interprets Lord's name 'Kṛṣṇa' in four ways. One of the meanings of the word 'Kṛṣṇa' is the dark half of a month, from the full moon-day to the new moon-day. The Lord is 'Kṛṣṇa' in this sense :

सपत्नपत्नीवदनोडुराजं क्रमेण यः क्षीणकलं करोति ।
सितेतरः पक्ष इवर्क्षनाथं गुणोचिता तस्य हि कृष्णसंज्ञा ।। (III-21)[3]

(He is rightly named as 'Kṛṣṇa'. For, just as the dark half of the month reduces gradually, and finally ruins, the lustre of the moon, Kṛṣṇa wipes off the charm of the moon-like faces of the wives of his enemies).

Another meaning of the word is derived from its root *Kṛṣ*, meaning 'attract' and this is also applicable to Kṛṣṇa :

यतः स्वसन्दर्शनतो नराणां वराङ्गनानां सुरचारणानाम् ।
मनांसि सर्वाण्यपकर्षतीशः ततोऽपि कृष्णं प्रवदन्ति सन्तः ।।
(III-22)[4]

(Lord Kṛṣṇa on mere being seen attracts the minds of men, of excellent maidens and of divine beings. Hence also he is called 'Kṛṣṇa').

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3. तस्य कृष्णस्य कृष्ण इति संज्ञा आख्या गुणोचिता चन्द्रकलाक्षय - हेतुत्वलक्षणगुणोचिता हि । तामिस्रपक्षकलिनीलगुणेषु कृष्णः इत्यभिधानात् ।
Com.of नारायणाचार्य

4. कृष आकर्षण इति धातोरौणादिके ण प्रत्यये रष्पाभ्यां नोणः समानपदे इति णत्वे च कृष्णशब्दस्य निष्पन्नत्वादिति भावः ।। *Ibid*

A third meaning of the word is 'black-coloured' :

यतः स पृथ्वीतलसंस्थितोऽपि सुखी धरण्याः सुखदायकश्च ।
ततोऽपि कृष्णं प्रवदन्ति कृष्णं समुल्लसत्केशवकेशरूपम् ।।
(III-23)[5]

(Even though living on this earth He is happy and bestows happiness. Hence, he is called Kṛṣṇa as he is the shining black-colour like that of Viṣṇu's hair).

Fourthly, the word denotes god Fire which reduces forests to black cinders.

यतश्च दैतेयकदम्बकक्षचयस्य विध्वंसविधौ मुरारिः ।
वनाग्निमन्वेति लयाग्निकल्पं ततोऽपि गायन्ति हि कृष्णमेनम् ।।
(III-24)[6]

(Kṛṣṇa imitates wild-fire in destroying the forest in the form of hosts of demons. Thus he resembles the fire of the world-dissolution. Hence also he is called 'Kṛṣṇa')

Now Brahmā, the Creator has many names like Ātmayoni or Svayambhū as he is self-born, Aja as he is unborn,

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5. . . .केशवस्य विष्णोः केशरूपं कृष्णकेशात्मकम्, अनेन कृष्णशब्द-वाच्यत्वे कृष्णकेशात्मकत्वम् च हेतुरित्युक्तं भवति कृष्णमिति प्रवदन्ति कृष्यते इति कृषिर्भूमिः तस्यामणि णः सुखरूपः कृषेर्भूमेर्णः सुखं यस्मादिति वा कृष्ण इति व्युत्पत्तेः । कृषिर्भूवाचकः शब्दो णश्च निर्वृत्तिवाचकः । तयोरैक्यं परं ब्रह्म कृष्ण इत्यभिधीयते इति स्मृतिसिद्धत्वादिति भावः । *Ibid*

6. व्यासार्जुनाग्निहरिकाकिलकाकशूद्रतामिस्रपक्षकलिनीलगुणेषु कृष्णः इति भास्करोक्तेरग्नेरपि कृष्णशब्दवाच्यत्वादितिभावः । *Ibid*

Padmāsana as he has a lotus as His seat. But Vādirāja fancies that these names were obtained by him because of various relations with Lord Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa :

आत्माभिधः स्वयमिति प्रथितो ह्यवाच्य -
स्तातोऽस्य यन्मुररिपुस्तदमुं मुनीन्द्राः ।
ख्यात्या स्वयम्भुवमजं विदुरात्मयोनिं
चेतःस्थितश्रुतिततिं सखि वेदगर्भम् ।। (XVI-3)

(Friend, Lord Viṣṇu, the Mura-slayer is called Ātman, Svayaṁ and *A*. This Brhmā is his son. Hence, he is called, by the sages, as Ātmayoni, Svayambhū and Aja, meaning thereby 'born of the Lord'. He is also known as *'Vedagarbha'* as he has in his mind the Vedas expounding Lord Viṣṇu.)

यदा स पद्मासनसंस्थितोऽलं जजाप विद्यामितरैरवेद्याम् ।
तदाप्रभृत्येव जगत्सु नूनं बभूव पद्मासनशब्दितोऽसौ ।।
(I-17)

(Brahmā uttered the songs, incomprehensible for others, eulogising the Lord while sitting on a lotus. Verily, thenonwards he came to be denoted by the term *'Padmāsana'*)

Similarly, Śiva has the epithets *'Digvasana'* (Naked or Unclothed); *'Anaṅgajit'* (Cupid-conqueror) and *Girīśa* (Mountain-lord). Vādirāja gives his meanings :

तदा तदन्यान्यपहाय हेयान्यरक्तचित्तः स विरिञ्चपुत्रः ।
स्तुवन् गिरीशोऽपि गिरा मुरारिमनङ्गजिद्दिग्वसनो बभूव ।।
(I-18)[7]

(Then Brahmā's son, Śiva cast off all abandon-worthy things and began to praise with words Lord Viṣṇu with his mind

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7. विष्विवतरविषयपरित्यागात् दिग्वसनः , अरक्तचित्तत्वात् अनङ्गजित्, गीर्भिस्स्तुतिकरणात् गिरीशश्च बभूव ।। *Ibid*

passion-free. Hence he became *Digvasana*, *Anangajit* and *Girīśa*).

Other deities also got their peculiar names because of their mode of meditation of Viṣṇu :

तदैव शेषोऽजनि वायुभक्षः सहस्रनेत्रोऽपि तदैव नूनम् ।
शतक्रतुः सुप्तिविदूरभावा बभूवुरस्वप्नपदाश्च देवाः ।। (I-19)

[Then the serpent-lord Śeṣa meditated on Viṣṇu by surviving only on air and hence he became *Vāyubhakṣa* (air-eater), thousand-eyed Indra got the fruit of performing hundred *aśvamedha* sacrifices (by meditating on Viṣṇu) and got the name *Śatakratu* (hundred-sacrifice-performer), and as the gods meditated on Him leaving away sleep, they got the name *Asvapna* (sleepless).]

The gods have also other names - *Animiṣa* (unwinking), *Vinidra* (sleepless) and *Amara* (immortal) and Vādirāja observes :-

इमे सुराः श्रीपतिनित्यसेवावियोगभीत्याऽनिमिषा विनिद्राः ।
प्रपेदिरे तत्करुणाप्रभूतसुधारसास्वादनतोऽमरत्वम् ।।(XVI-27)

(These gods do not wink their eyes, and do not enjoy sleep because they are afraid that thereby they would be bereft of Lord's service during that period. Hence they are called *Animiṣa* and *Vinidra*. They have become *Amara* or immortal by tasting the nectar given profusely by Him having mercy on them).

It is well known that the Earth has got the name *Acala* (*unmoving*) and *Sarvaṁsaha* (all-tolerator). Vādirāja narrates the incident which brought her these two names:

रसा पिपासोग्रभराशनाया विषह्य विष्णुं मनसाऽचलेन ।
तदानुधावन्त्यचलेति सर्वसहेति नूनं जगदे जगत्याम् ।। (1.20)

(The Earth forbore everything like thirst, burden and hunger and meditated on Viṣṇu with an unmoving mind. Certainly, since then she came to be known by names *Sarvaṁsaha* and *Acala*).

Vādirāja deals with other persons also whether they are Kṛṣṇa's devotees or his enemies. The conwherdesses of Vṛndāvana observe that Akrūra (not cruel) is not true to his name:

अयमपि च विरुद्धनामधेयो नयति विलापमुपेक्ष्य कामिनीनाम् ।
प्रियसरसविलासमग्र्यवेषं कमलदृशं कमनीयचारुहासम् ।।

(X-39)

(This Akrūra's deed is exactly opposite to his name. Because, disregarding our lamentations he is carrying away (this Kṛṣṇa to Madhurā) one who possesses pleasing graces, who has put on the best dress, who is lotus-eyed and who has charming and absorbing smile).

Why is Ugrasena, the father of Kaṁsa, so called? Vādirāja fancies:

उग्रसेनो विजयते स्वर्गिभिर्गीतवैभवः ।

अग्रेसरा यद्ध्वजिन्यां उग्रा रामादयो द्विषाम् ।। (XII-39)

(Ugrasena is so called because his ever-conquering *senā* or army consists of Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa and others who are *ugra* or terrible to the enemies. Such Ugrasena whose prosperity is sung by heavenly beings, is always victorious).

In canto XI of the *Rukmiṇīśavijaya*, there is an incident where Indra sends his chariot with charioteer Mātali for the use of Kṛṣṇa who was engaged in a battle with Kaṁsa. The term charioteer has its Sanskrit equivalent '*Sūta*' besides '*Sārathi*'. Vādirāja gives the reason of Mātali being called as '*Sūta*'.

चिरं पुरा वैष्णवसेवनेन मुकुन्दसामीप्यफलं प्रपन्नः ।
स मातलिस्तस्य विचित्रवीर्यमभून्निरीक्ष्योभयथापि सूतः ।।
(XI-57)[8]

(Mātali served Indra, Viṣṇu's devotee and got the fruit of the vicinity of Kṛṣṇa. Now he, as a charioteer is witnessing and singing the wonderful powers of Kṛṣṇa and hence he has become *Sūta* in its both the senses (viz. charioteer and bard).

The term '*Putra*' meaning a son has a significant connotation in Sanskrit. It means one who saves from, or helps to cross the hell named '*Put*' and it means 'son' as he saves his parents from that hell. Vādirāja raises a question whether Kṛṣṇa can be called the son of Vasudeva and Devakī. It is highly preposterous to call him the son of any body when he is the father of one and all and when he has no birth at all. But Vādirāja maintains that there is no harm in calling Kṛṣṇa as their *Putra*:

य एष पुत्संज्ञितनारकस्थान् जनान् स्वनामस्मरणेन पाति ।
स दृष्टिगः सन् वसुदेवपत्न्याः कथं न पुत्रः शतपत्रनेत्रः ।।(I-47)[9]

(This Kṛṣṇa protects, by mere remembrance of his name, all those sufferers in the *Put*-named hell. How would such lotus-eyed one, not be the *Putra* of the wife of Vasudeva, when beheld by her?)

Vādirāja tries to explain the meaning of '*Dvāravatī*', name of the city newly built by Kṛṣṇa. One of the meanings is:

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8. उभयथापि रथे नेतृतया श्रीकृष्णगुणस्तोतृतया च सूतोऽभूत् ।। *Ibid*
9. नामस्मरणमात्रं कुर्वतामप्ययं पुत्रः, किल कथं देवक्याः प्रत्यक्षीभूतः कृष्णः पुत्रो न भवेदित्यर्थः । पुत्रो नरकात् त्रायते इति व्युत्पत्तिमादाय पुराणादौ देवकीपुत्रत्वोक्तिरिति भावः। दृष्टिगः इत्यनेन माङ्मानेति धातोः मिनोति जानातीति व्युत्पत्त्या देवक्याः मातृत्वप्रसिद्धिरपि उपपद्यत इति द्योत्यते। *Ibid*

इहाखिलैश्वर्यसुभोगवृद्धेः परत्र निःश्रेयससौख्यसिद्धेः ।
महःपरं द्वारमवाप्य पृथ्व्यामसौ पुरी द्वारवती बभूव ।।
(XVII-26)[10]

(In this world, this city has become the dwelling place of Kṛṣṇa, whose supreme lustre is the *Dvāra* (door) to obtain worldly prosperity and other-worldly liberation. Hence it came to be called *Dvāravatī*)

Similar is the case with the term *Bhūbhṛt* (Earth-bearer) which ordinarily means a mountain. While describing the event of Kṛṣṇa's lifting Mount Govardhana, Vādirāja remarks that it really means Kṛṣṇa and not any mountain:

मयीश्वरे भूभृति जागरूके स्वयं च भूभृत्किल बुद्धिशून्यः ।
स इत्यमर्षादिव भूधरेन्द्रं करेण भूमेरुदबीभिदत्तम् ।। (V-58)[11]

("When I, the Earth-bearer is always alert, this fool thinks himself to be the Earth-bearer"-Thinking thus Kṛṣṇa as if in anger, uprooted the mountain from the earth) [It is said that the Lord supports the Earth as the world-bearing Kūrma or Tortoise on which stands the serpent Lord Śeṣa bearing the Earth on his hood].

Vikuṇṭha or Vaikuṇṭha is so named because therein one enjoys unobstructed (*Vikuṇṭha*) vision of Lord Viṣṇu:-

व्रजे महं तोषसितं विकुण्ठं भजेम चक्षुर्विषये त्वयीशे।
व्रजेम हन्तोषसि तं विकुण्ठं न चेत्त्वदीक्षोत्सवभङ्गहीनम् ।।
(VIII-8)

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10. यद्यपि द्वारमस्यां वर्तत इति व्युत्पत्तिसम्भवात् सर्वासामपि पुरीणां द्वारवतित्वं तथापि उक्तरीत्या विलक्षणद्वारवत्वात् असाधारण्येन व्यपदेशा भवन्तीति, न्यायात् अस्या एव द्वारवती शब्दवाच्यत्वम् ।। *Ibid*
11. यदि त्वमपि भूभ्रत् तर्हि त्वदुन्मूलने भूमेः पातःस्यात् इत्यमर्षादिव कोपादिव भूधरेन्द्रं पर्वतश्रेष्ठं तं गोवर्धनं करेण हस्तेन भूमेः सकाशात् उदबीभीदत्। *Ibid*

(Lord, if you show yourself to us, we will enjoy unobstructed festivities here in the Gokula itself. Otherwise we will depart by day-break to Vikuṇṭha where one has unobstructed vision of yours). This is the lament of the cowherdesses on the disppearance of Kṛṣṇa.

There are many terms in Sanskrit denoting mind. One of them is *Svānta* or one's inner organ. But according to Vādirāja, the term applies to only that mind which is fixed on Kṛṣṇa:

स्वान्तं तदेव यत्तेऽङ्घ्रिकमले चञ्चरीकति ।
स्वान्तकारीतरन्मन्ये भ्रमद्भुजगसन्निभम् ।। (X-82)

[O Lord, only that is the *Svānta* or mind which hovers always on the lotus-like feet of yours. Other minds which wander hither and thither like a snake, bring about their own *svānta* (one's end)].[12]

Vādirāja as a unique etymologist does not ignore even those who are Kṛṣṇa-haters. He gives also his derivation of their names. It is said that Kaṁsa's wife was named Asti. This word as a verb means 'exists' from the root '*as*'. When she went to complain against Kṛṣṇa on his killing her husband Kaṁsa, to her father Jarāsandha, Vādirāja fancies that she wanted to make her name, true to its sense:

कंसे बलैः सह मृते सति याऽवशिष्टा
वंशं स्वमातुरपि तादृशमस्तिनाम्नी ।
कृत्वोचितं विदधतीव निजाभिधानं
पित्रे न्यवेदयदथाच्युतकृत्यमार्ता ।। (XIII-38)[13]

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12. नाखण्डवृत्त्या तस्य स्वान्तपदवाच्यता अपि तु स्वस्यान्तो यस्मादिति स्वान्तपदवाच्यं तदिति भावः । *-Ibid*

13. स्वभर्तृकुलस्थेषु स्वमातृकुलस्थेषु सर्वेषु मृतेषु सत्सु स्वयमेव भूमौ अस्ति इति व्युत्पत्त्या स्वकीयमस्तिनाम सार्थकं कुर्वतीव । *-Ibid*

(When Kaṁsa died together with his army there did exist (*asti*) only this woman. Now she wanted to make her name completely meaningful by reducing likewise even her mother's family. As if with that intention, she reported Kṛṣṇa's deed to her father).

Many demons had been sent to Vṛndāvana by Kaṁsa to destroy Kṛṣṇa. Among them was one named Keśin, who had taken the form of an *aśva* or horse. Vādirāja imagines the cause of his taking that form:

मुकुन्दमाजौ प्रतियास्यतो मे न जीविताशा ननु विद्यते श्वः ।
इतीव निश्चित्य जगाम केशी जवेन नन्दव्रजमश्वरूपी ।।

(X-11)[14]

[As I am attacking Kṛṣṇa in the battle, there is no (*a*) hope of my living tomorrow (*śvaḥ*). Having thus decided Keśin went hurriedly to Vṛndāvana in the form of a horse (*aśva*)]

In the fifteenth canto of the *Rukmiṇīśavijaya*, it is narrated that Kṛṣṇa went to the garden named Mūlamādhava to celebrate his marriage with Rukmiṇī. Vādirāja states the event which caused that name:

यदिन्दिरायास्तदभूद्धि मूलं प्रियाङ्गसंश्लेषमहोत्सवश्रियः ।

ततस्तदार्याः प्रवदन्ति नूनं स्थलं स्थलज्ञा भुवि मूलमाधवम् ।।

(XV-28)[15]

(That garden became the *mūla* or basis for Lakṣmī to enjoy the pleasure of the embrace of her lover (*Mādhava*) and hence the wise who possess the knowledge of the places, call it as *Mūlamādhava*)

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14. श्वो न विद्यते इत्यश्व इति व्युत्पत्तेः। *Ibid*
15. मायाः लक्ष्म्याः धवस्य पत्युः मूलं मूलमाधवमिति व्युत्पत्तेरिति भावः ।। *Ibid*

There are also many more etymologies given by Vādirāja in his *Rukmiṇīśavijaya*. E.g. Aniruddha (XIX, 31), Aśoka (VII. 24) Indra (XVI. 25) Kuvalayāpīḍa (XI.37), Jarāsandha (XIV.16), Muṣṭika (XI.49), Ratnākara (XVII.31) among others.

The salient feature of Vādirāja's etymologies is that even though they appear to be uncommon, they bring out the distinguishing property, which has been narrated in works on which his poem is based. One must note that these names are not coined by him like any other writer composing fiction who is free to give his own names to the characters invented by him. Secondlly, these etymologies are both scholarly and poetical and hence they do appeal to both the learned as well as the connoisseurs, Moreover, they bring out effectively the greatness of Kṛṣṇa and arouse devotion for him in the minds of the readers. And thus, Vādirāja as an etymologist has also been successful in highlighting *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, the central theme of his poem.

CHAPTER VII

VĀDIRĀJA'S USE OF *VĀKOVĀKYĀLAṄKĀRA*

As a master-poet, Vādirāja has made judicious use of well known *Śabdālaṅkāras* like *anuprāsa* and *yamaka* and *Arthālaṅkāras* like *upamā*, *rūpaka*, *utprekṣā*, *arthāntaranyāsa* and others. But one of the unique features of his *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* is that he has made also effective use of a rare *Alaṅkāra* called *Vākovākyālaṅkāra*. Though it is classified as a *Śabdālaṅkāra*, it consists of charming and interesting dialogues involving beauty of both word and sense. This is an addtional merit of Vādirāja as it is not found in great poets like Kālidāsa, Bhāravi, Māgha and others.

The *Vākovākyālaṅkāra* is defined as :

उक्तिप्रत्युक्तिमद्वाक्यं वाकोवाक्यं विदुर्बुधाः ।
द्वयोर्वक्त्रोस्तदिच्छन्ति बहूनामपि संगमे ।। [1]

and

उक्तिप्रत्युक्तिमद्वाक्यं वाकोवाक्यमितीरितम् ।।[2]

It means that it is a dialogue between two persons. Even when there are many persons present, the dialogue should be only between two persons. It can consist of question and answer or statement and counter-statement. But in essence it should be poetic. The wording and the import should be charming. There can be effective use of punning words.

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1. Bhoja, *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa* II. 131.
2. Viśveśvara Kavicandra, *Camatkāracandrikā*, Meharchand Lachhmandas, Delhi, 1972. P. 145

Here an attempt has been made to highlight the effective use of *Vākovākyālaṅkāra* made by Vādirāja in his *Rukmiṇīśavijaya.*

This is a dialogue between child Kṛṣṇa and his mother Yaśodā, when the latter was trying to make him sleep:-

निद्रामाश्रय किं तदाश्रयफलं भुक्तं व्रजेज्जीर्णतां
निद्रा काम्ब निमीलिताक्षियुगलः प्राज्ञं यदालिङ्गति ।
अस्त्वेवं त्विति मुद्रितात्मनयनः स्वाङ्गं समालिङ्ग्य त -
त्सर्वं जीर्णमथो दिशेति जननीं शंसन्निजं सोऽवतात् ।। (III-12)

The mother tells him "Sleep my child". He asks "Why for?" "All eaten gets digested" "Mother, what is sleep?"[3] "It is the condition when one having closed his eyes resorts to the Indweller called Prājña"[4] "Let it be so". Having said thus, Kṛṣṇa closed his eyes, and resorted to himself. Then he said to her "All eaten is digested. Give me something to eat". Such Lord Kṛṣṇa may protect his devotees- the poet prays.

The next verse is again a dialogue between the mother and Kṛṣṇa when the mother was singing lullaby to make him sleep while swinging the cradle:-

मातर्गायसि किं सदा जलनिधौ शेषाङ्गसंशायिनं
तातासौ ननु निद्रया परिवृतो दद्यात्तवापीति ताम् ।
एवं चेद्गदितं त्वदीयमखिलं तत्कर्णदिशं कथं
यातीति प्रतिपादयन्निजमतं पायाद्यशोदासुतः ।। (III-13)

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3. निद्रा नाम का कीदृशीति पुनर्मातरं प्रति शिशुवेषानुसारेण नित्यप्रबुद्धतया निद्रापदार्थमजानतः कृष्णस्य वचनम् । अनेन नित्यप्रबुद्धतया परमात्मनः कृष्णस्य निद्रादिदोषराहित्यं ध्वन्यते । Com. of नारायणाचार्य ।

4. प्राज्ञेनात्मना संपरिष्वक्तो न वाह्यं किञ्चन वेदेति श्रुतेः इति पुनर्मातृवचनम् । *-Ibid.*

"Mother why do you always sing glories of him lying on a serpent in the ocean" "Child, let Him, engrossed in sleep give you too that sleep".[5] "If it is true that He is sleeping, how will your song reach his ears?"[6] Let Kṛṣṇa who thus reveals his view of sleeplessness[7] protect all.

It is well known that Lord Kṛṣṇa as a child was committing theft[8] of butter, curds and like,in the houses of cowherds and thus he was confronted by the cowherdesses. This is how their dialogue runs-

हस्तः किं नवनीतभाजनमुखे न्यस्तस्त्वया श्रीपते
दृसप्रस्तरसंमितातिकठिनावस्थान्तराया गृहे ।
युक्ता न स्थितिरस्य कोमलहृदस्तत्तन्वि चित्ते मम
प्रीत्या स्थापयितुं मृगाक्षि मृदुनीत्युक्त्वा हसन्पात्वसौ ।। (III - 40)

Here a cowherdess takes objection to Kṛṣṇa's putting his hand in the butter-pot and Kṛṣṇa gives a very amusing reply

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5. स्वविषयकगानं श्रुत्वा सन्तुष्टस्तवापि तां स्वसंस्थितां निद्रां दिशत्विति तं गायामीत्यर्थः । *-Ibid.*
6. निद्रातीतस्य परमात्मनो निद्रावृतत्त्वत्वमसहमानो मातरं प्रत्याह । *-Ibid.*
7. निद्रां दापयितुं तद्विषयकगानं कुर्वत्या त्वयैव निद्राऽभावोऽवश्यमङ्गीकर्तव्य इत्यनेन प्रकारेण निजमतं स्वस्य परमात्मनो मतं विनिद्रत्वमतं प्रतिपादयन् यशोदासुतः पायात् अवतात् । *-Ibid.*
8. It is interesting to note that Vādirāja states that theft is the *Siddhavidyā* or the mastered skill of the Lord who steals away, day and night, the sins of His devotees-

स्वभक्तपुञ्जार्चितपापवृन्दं
दिवानिशं यो हरति स्म बालः ।
गृहे गृहे दुग्धमसावमुष्णा-
त्तथा हि कस्त्यक्ष्यति सिद्धविद्याम् ।। (III - 39)

to her: "O Kṛṣṇa, why did you put your hand in the butter-pot?" "O slender bodied and deer-eyed one, it is not proper for this soft butter to dwell in your house, as your heart is rough and tough like a stone, you being haughty minded. Hence, I am taking it out to keep it fondly in my soft mind". Kṛṣṇa smiling with these words, may protect all.

Here the commentator explains that this dialogue has an esoteric meaning also. The question asked by her suggests that she is only pretending anger on Kṛṣṇa. And the reply given by him reveals that it is not proper for her to drive him away who has come only to favour her and that the Lord is so full of mercy that He is graceful even to the womenfolk who do not possess the highest knowledge.[9] Thus he skilfully conceals his theft!

But the cowherdess is not to be fooled by this clever reply. She makes out a case against his being soft and delicate:-

> यस्य श्रीचरणाम्बुजेन शकटः सञ्चूर्णिताङ्गोऽभव -
> तस्याङ्गे मृदुता न युक्तिसहितेत्युक्ते मुदा योऽवदत् ।
> बाल्ये मामधिरोप्य वक्षसि शिशुं सन्नर्तयन्त्यास्तव
> स्थूलोरोजसमागमेन तदिति प्रौढिं स दद्यान्मम ।। (III - 41)

It is well known that Kṛṣṇa had pounded to pieces Śakaṭāsura or the demon who had taken the form of a cart to destroy him when he was a mere child. "How can such a hard-bodied Kṛṣṇa claim to be soft to claim the soft butter?" is the query of the cowherdess. And he does not admit defeat in

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9. अत्र हस्तः किमित्यादिना श्रीपत इत्यन्तेन गोप्याः कोपनटनं दृप्तप्रस्तरेत्यादिना निःस्पृहस्य त्वदनुग्रहार्थमागतस्य मम निराकरणमनुचितं तन्वि मृगाक्षीत्यनेन तस्याः वशीकरणानुनयः मृदुनि चित्त इत्यनेन ज्ञानशून्यस्य स्त्रीजनस्याप्यनुग्रहं कुर्वतो देवस्यानुकम्पातिशयः स्वचौर्यगूहनचातुर्यं च द्योत्यते ।। *-Ibid.*

advancing a clever reply. He admits of having killed the demon by his feet and also admits thereby that his feet are too hard. But they were not so before he came in contact with her. She made them so hard. How? By making him, a mere child, dance on her breasts which are extremely hard and this contact with her breasts made his feet also hard like a thunder-bolt. And the poet prays that such Kṛṣṇa may bestow upon him the faculty of skilful talk.

Now the cowherdess attempts to punish him by tying him up, and again he gives a clever reply:-

वध्नाम्यद्य भवन्तमङ्ग कितवं साध्यं ततः किं प्रिये
दुग्धानां परिरक्षणं कपटसन्नद्धे निबद्धे त्वयि ।
मुग्धे त्वं विरसा समुज्झसि परं स्निग्धं न तन्मां त्यजे -
त्पद्माक्षीत्यबलामुदीर्य वशयन् बुद्धिं स दद्यान्मम ।। (III - 42)

She threatens him saying "O you rogue, today I will just bind you down with fetters". "Dear one, what would you achieve by that?" "What do I achieve? Very much. By tying you who are bent upon deceit, entire milk and milk-products will become protected". "O innocent and lotus-eyed, you bereft of affection may leave me. But viscidity of milk will not leave me. It is glued to me".[10] May such Kṛṣṇa endearing the passionate cowherdess grant me wisdom-thus the poet prays.

The manifold plays of Lord Kṛṣṇa as a child include the event of the *Gopikāvastrāpaharaṇa* or his stealing away the garments of the cowherdesses who had plunged into river Yamunā for bathing. And Vādirāja has taken advantage of this event to weave an interesting dialogue between Kṛṣṇa on the one hand

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10. अङ्गेतिसम्बोधनात् वन्धनं प्रेम्णैव न कोपेनेति ध्वन्यते । . . . अत्र विरसा त्वं समुज्झसीत्यनेनातिमनोहरे मयि अनुरागाभावः कामिन्यास्तव नोचितः स्तिग्धं न तन्मां त्यजेदित्यनेनानुरागेणाहं वश्यः मुग्धे पद्माक्षीत्यनेन तस्या वशीकरणाय अनुनयश्च द्योत्यते । *-Ibid.*

and cowherdesses on the other. Moreover this dialogue having punning words, has also philosophical overtones:-

देहीशाम्वरमस्मदीयमबला दत्तं क्व तद्वर्तते
मध्ये वः प्रतिभाति तर्हि न कथं संदृश्यतेऽस्मद्दृशा ।
मुग्धास्तार्किकमौलियुक्त्यकलितं तन्नैव वः शक्यते
द्रष्टुं चञ्चललोचनैरिति वदन्कृष्णः स पुष्णातु माम् ।। (V-48)

The cowherdesses beg him to return their garments. The poet has used the word *ambara* for garment. This is a double meaning word, meaning also sky. Kṛṣṇa takes this meaning and replies "Already given to you". They become confounded because they are sure that they have not received any garment from him. So they ask in return "Where is it?" "Surely there, appearing in your waists!" "But how is it that it is not visible to our eyes?" "O innocent ones, that which is not known by the power of inference by the logicians, can never become visible to your flickering eyes?"-The poet prays protection from such a Kṛṣṇa.

Here the commentator explains that when he said "Already given", he meant that he as the All-creator, is also the creator of their waists and a slender waist is a point of feminine beauty and thus its invisibility reveals their extreme loveliness.[11]

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11. हे अबलाः अम्बरं दत्तमिति गूढाभिसन्धेः श्रीकृष्णस्य छलोत्तरं श्रीकृष्णस्य सर्वस्रष्टृत्वाद्गोपिकानां मध्यस्यापि तत्स्रष्टृत्वाद्दत्तमिति उचितम् । हे ईश त्वया दत्तमन्बरं क्व कुत्र वर्तत इत्यभिसन्धिमजानतीनां गोपीनां प्रत्युक्तिः । हे अबलाः मया दत्तमम्बरं वो युष्माकं मध्ये जात्येकवचनं मध्येषु प्रतिभाति । इति गूढाभिसन्धेः श्रीकृष्णस्य पुनर्वचनम् ।स्त्रीणां मध्यस्यातिसौक्ष्म्यादप्रकाशमानत्वेनाम्बरत्वव्यपदेशः । अनेन गोपीषु श्रीकृष्णेन तनुमध्या इति स्वानुरागनिवेदनरूपा स्तुतिः कृतेति व्यज्यते । यदि अम्बरमस्माकं मध्ये तिष्ठति तर्हि अस्मद्दृशा अस्मद्दृष्ट्या कथं न संदृश्यत इति गोपीनां पुनर्वचनम् ।श्रीकृष्णः स्वाभिप्रायमुद्घाटयति । मुग्धा इति । हे मुग्धाः मूढास्तार्किकमौलीनां तार्किकश्रेष्ठानां गौतमादीनां युक्तिभिरनुमानैरकलितमज्ञातं तदम्बरं व्योम वो युष्माकं चञ्चललोचनैः चपलनयनैः । अनेन व्योम्नः सुतरां लोचनागोचरत्वं सूच्यते । द्रष्टुं नैव शक्यते । अनुमानागोचरस्यातीन्द्रियस्य साक्षिसिद्धस्य गगनस्य चक्षुषा द्रष्टुमशक्यत्वादिति भावः । *–Ibid*

In the sixth canto of the *Rukmiṇīśavijaya,* Vādirāja points out how the cowherdesses ran out of their houses when they heard the melody of Kṛṣṇa's flute. When they approach him he tests their attachment to him, by trying to send them to their hearths and husbands. But they cleverly reveal their steadfast attachment to him. If, while stealing butter in their houses he had fooled them by his clever replies, now is their turn to shut his mouth by their cleverly worded replies. Here are two such verses :-

धर्मो न वोऽयं श्रुतिसङ्गताक्ष्यो
धर्मो नवोऽयं श्रुतिसङ्गताक्ष ।
मान्यं भजध्वं रमणं विहाय
मान्यं भजामो रमणं विहाय ।।
हिताहिताज्ञा वत यूयमङ्गना
यतो ह्यधर्मे मतिरस्ति निश्चला ।
हिताहितज्ञा वयमच्युत प्रभो
यतो ह्यधर्मे मतिरस्ति निश्चला ।। (VI-62,63)

Kṛṣṇa tells them "You, who possess the scriptural knowledge, it does not behove you to aspire for my company who am not your husband". They reply in the same words but with a changed splitting of words "You, of wide eyes, this is a novel mode of worship" "You ladies, do not serve others leaving aside your husbands"-when he warns them thus, they give a clever twist to his own words and reply : "We shall serve the worthy one (i.e.yourself) leaving aside our husbands".

The commentator here explains that first line "*Dharmo na vo'yaṁ śrutisaṅgatākṣyah* has two meanings-one exoteric given above and another one esoteric which is, "O you wide-eyed beauties, this action of yours of serving me alone is a novel one". And they approve his statement in their reply. This service

of God is called novel (*navah*) because it is beyond the comprehension of materialists who hanker after only physical pleasure.[12] The third line "*Mānyaṁ bhajadhvaṁ ramaṇaṁ vihāya*" has also another sense which is approved of in the reply given by the cowherdesses.[13]

In the next verse, "*Hitāhitājñāh.......*" there is a play on the word `*adharma*' which has an exoteric sense viz. misdeed or irreligious act, and an esoteric sense "the duty of serving *A* or Lord Viṣṇu". The first half of the verse contains Kṛṣṇa's exhortation to the cowherdesses taking the exoteric sense of the word `*adharma*' : "Certainly you ladies, do not know what is beneficial and what is harmful; because, your mind is firm in misconduct". When Kṛṣṇa thus admonishes them, they defend their action of serving him leaving behind service to their husbands by their reply taking the esoteric sense of the term "*adharma*"-"O Lord, we know what is beneficial and what is harmful and only therefore our mind is firm in serving you who are denoted by the term '*A*'."

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12. अयं परपुरुषपरिग्रहः वो युष्माकं धर्मो न भवति ।
तस्माद्गन्तव्यमित्यङ्गीकारो वाह्यः ।
आन्तरस्तु हे श्रुतिसङ्गताक्ष्यः श्रुतिभिः श्रवणैः संगतानि अक्षीणि लोचनानि यासां ताः। . . .आकर्णान्तलोचना इति गोपीनां चित्ताकर्षणार्थं स्तुतिः। . . . अयं पत्यादिकं परित्यज्य मत्सेवैव कर्तव्येति भवतीभिरुक्तो धर्मो नवः नूतनः अपूर्व इत्यर्थः । सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं चरणं वृजेति प्रमाणप्रसिद्धत्वादिति भावः । इति कृष्णोक्ताः गोप्यः श्रीकृष्णस्याभिसन्धिमुद्घाटयन्ति । धर्म इति। . . . हे श्रुतिसंगताक्ष कर्णान्तायतलोचन श्रीकृष्ण अयं गोपीनां प्रेमोद्रेकोत्सवात् त्वत्सेवारूपो धर्मो नवः नूतनः विषयासक्तैरज्ञातचरः। *-Ibid.*
13. पुनर्गूढाभिसन्धिः कृष्णो वदति । मान्यमिति । रमणं स्वपतिं विहायान्यं मा भजध्वं इदं तु बाह्यम्। रमणं विहाय मान्यं जगत्पूज्यं मामेव भजध्वं औपपत्यनिषेधस्तु लौकिकपुरुषनिषेधपर इति हृदयम् ।गोप्योपि हृदयमुद्घाटयन्ति । मान्यमिति । हे कृष्ण रमणं पतिं विहाय मान्यं पूज्यं त्वामेव भजामः ।

Here also the commentator explains that the speech of Kṛṣṇa has two meanings. The one is given above. In the other meaning, the phrase '*Hitāhitājñāh*' is dissolved as "*Hitena āhitā ājñā yāsām tāh*" which means "those who have been instructed by the benevolent i.e. the all-benevolent world-creator Brahmā". As the instruction of Brahmā is service of God, they reveal that they are doing exactly what Kṛṣṇa wants them to do.[14]

The seventh canto of the *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* is devoted to describe the lamentations of the cowherdesses on the disappearance of Kṛṣṇa in the Vṛndāvana. Like the love-stricken and longing beloveds, they go on asking about him to the trees, sprouts, creepers, bees and so on. Vādirāja has taken advantage of these scenes in giving us interesting dialogue-verses containing the speeches of the cowherdesses. This is a dialogue between two of them near a tree whom they asked about the whereabouts of Kṛṣṇa-

सखि तरुरयमज्ञो नैव जानाति कृष्णं
किमिति विधिनिदेशाद् ज्ञानशून्यो हि वृक्षः ।
यदुतिलकवियोगादस्तु मे ज्ञानहानि -
र्गतविरहभयस्य ज्ञानहनिः कुतोऽस्य ।। (VII - 30)

"Friend, this tree is senseless and hence can never know Kṛṣṇa" "Why for?" is the question of the friend. "The creator has created

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14. हिताहितेति।हे अङ्गनाः गोप्यः यूयं हितमिष्टं अहितमनिष्टं च न जानन्तीति हिताहिताज्ञाः । कुतः यतः कारणात् अधर्मे निषिद्धे निश्चला दृढा मतिर्बुद्धिरस्ति हि। बत खेदे इति बाह्यम् । हे अङ्गनाः शुभांग्य इति स्तुतिः यूयं हितेन सर्वभूतानां हितोपदेष्ट्रा पितामहेनाहिता दत्ता आज्ञा यासां ताः जनिष्यते तत्सेवार्थं सम्भवन्तु सुरस्त्रिय इति भागवतवचनादिति भावः । कुतः यतः कारणात् अस्य अकारवाच्यस्य परमात्मनः सम्बन्धिनि । अ इति ब्रह्मेति श्रुतेः । धर्मे वैष्णवधर्मे इत्यर्थः । निश्चला मतिरस्तीति हृदयम् । हृदयमुद्घाटयन्ति। हे अच्युत प्रभो श्रीकृष्ण वयं हिताहितज्ञाः यतः अधर्मे निश्चला मतिरस्ति । *-Ibid*

it so"-is the reply. At this the friend remarks"-"Let there be senselessness in me who am separated from Kṛṣṇa. How can this be senseless when it does not have the fear of such separation ?"

In the same canto there is an interesting dialogue which brings out the pride of a cowherdess who tries to hide her real intention-

रमणि रुचिररूपः किं विदूरे तवासी -
न्न हि न हि मम पुण्यं तन्वि दूरे प्रयातम् ।
बत यदुकुलनाथः स त्वया मृग्यते किं
न हि सखि सह नीतं चित्तमन्वेषयामि ।। (VII-45)

A friend asks "O beauty, has that lovely Kṛṣṇa gone away from you?" The beauty replies "No, no, my merit has gone far away". "Certainly you must be searching that Kṛṣṇa only". "No, no, I am not searching him. Never. I am just searching my mind which went with him".

The ninth canto contains meaningful dialogues between Kṛṣṇa and one or the other cowherdess. Here is a cowherdess confronting him to know the reason of his running away from her in fear, if he had been approaching to sport with her only-

यद्यायासि रिरंसयेश महितं मद्धाम तर्ह्यध्वनि
स्निग्धां मामवलोक्य भीतपदवीं सद्योऽलभिष्ठाः कुतः ।
उद्वीक्ष्य स्तनजृम्भिकुम्भयुगलं कुम्भीश्वराशङ्कया
पद्माक्षीति निगद्य सुस्मितमुखीं चुम्बन् स तां जृम्भते ।। (IX-54)

"Beloved Kṛṣṇa ! if you were coming to my adorned house itself with the desire of sporting with me, what frightened you on seeing me so that you started running away?" "O lotus-eyed one,

I saw two elephant-frontal globes on your chest and mistook you to be a royal tusker and ran away to escape from its attack".

The reply given by him is a clever one to hide his offense of ignoring her to approach someone else. But as the commentator explains, she became extremely pleased by hearing his reply which was her praise itself.[15] The poet ends the verse by stating that she was kissed by him. And the commentator adduces the reason for his kissing: He was afraid that she might speak out his some more offences and he kissed to prevent her from any more speaking.[16]

But she could not be fooled so easily. When he kissed her she noticed his injured lip bitten by someone else and her pride got wounded. Consequently she admonished him[17] and again received a deft reply:

अन्याचुम्बनजातचिह्नमधुना विम्बाधरे दृश्यते
तन्मां रञ्जयसीश किं प्रियगिरा धन्यावला सैव हि ।
मन्यूद्रिक्तहृदा मुहुः सखि भवच्छून्यां सभां पश्यतः
तन्मेऽभूद्वरवर्णिनीति शमयन्मन्मानसे स्यादसौ ।। (IX - 55)

"Lord, visible is the sign of your lip being kissed by someone else. Then why do you try to mollify me with your sweet words? She alone is the blessed one!" And he corrects her misunderstanding of his injured lip: "Beloved one, it so happened that when I entered the assembly, I searched for your

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15. स्वलावण्यस्यैव वर्णनात्स्मेराननाम् . . . . . । *-Ibid*
16. अतःपरमपि कथञ्चित्स्वापराधमुद्घाटयिष्यतीति भिया वाग्बन्धनार्थं मुखमेव चुम्बन् . . . । *-Ibid*
17. वाग्बन्धनाय चुम्बनं कर्तुं उपनीते मुखे अधरव्रणदर्शनात् तवापराधपरिहारोपाय एव अपायो जात इति पुनः प्रत्युवाचेति भावः । *-Ibid*

lovely form and when I could not behold it, I became so enraged by your absence that I bit my own lip?"-The poet prays that such Kṛṣṇa may dwell in his mind.

This is a verse which contains affectionate talk between Kṛṣṇa and a beloved :

कस्त्वं कश्चन निर्जरोऽहमिह ते स्वर्गः क्व तत्त्वद्गृहं
पीयूषं क्व तवाधरेऽस्ति सुभगे क्वास्ते तवानिद्रिता ।
त्वत्प्रेम्णां सखि चिन्तयाऽनिमिषता कुत्र प्रिये पश्यतः
त्वद्रूपं त्विति वल्लवी प्रियगिरा चक्री स चक्रे निजाम् ।।(IX -63)

"Who are you?: "I am a god". "Where is your heaven?" "It is your house." "Where is the nectar?" "My love, it is in your lips." "How is your sleeplessness?" "It is there, always being worried about your love." "How is your non-winking?" "It is caused by steadfastly looking at your beauty"-Thus talking Kṛṣṇa made her his own.

In the eleventh canto, Vādirāja has invented an incident wherein Kaṁsa is tormented and tortured by his own frightened mind. It is fancied as a messenger from his enemy Kṛṣṇa. This is how they two converse :

कस्त्वं सोऽहमरे त्वदन्तकतटादभ्यागतो वै भटः
पृथ्व्यां क्वास्ति ममान्तकः स भुवनेष्वन्तर्बहिर्वर्तते ।
नमाप्यस्य न देवकीसुत इति ख्यातस्स तन्नन्दनो
ध्वस्तो ह्यङ्ग मृतिर्न तस्य निहतास्तेन त्वदीयाः परम् ।। (XI-18)

"Who are you?" "O, I am a messenger from your killer". "Where is my killer in this world?" "He is pervading in and out all the worlds". "No name to him?" "Well known as son of Devakī" "O, that son of Devakī? He met his death long back at my own

hands! Away with him" "You fool, he has no death at all! Don't you see that he brought death to your people?"

मल्लाः शैलसमा वलं च जगति प्रख्यातमस्त्येव मे
हस्ती हस्तिसहस्रसम्मितबलस्तत्क्वास्ति मृत्युर्मम ।
राजन्मृत्युरिवाहमेव भवतां चिते समुज्जृम्भितो
दृष्टं वस्तु भयङ्करं विरचये शङ्कासहस्रार्पकः ।। (XI - 19)

"Don't frighten me by these vain boasts. My wrestlers are formidable like mountains. My own might is well known world-wide. I own the tusker Kuvalayāpīḍa possessing the strength of thousand elephants. How can there be any death to me?" "O King, here I myself am like your death bristling in your mind. I cause hundreds of worries in you and make all things seen by you quite frightening."

किं भ्रान्तोऽसि विरुद्धभाषणमिदं मा ब्रूहि भो दुर्मते
भ्रान्तिस्ते विपरीतवागपि मनो यत्ते मया निर्जितम् ।
मत्खड्गाभिहतिं किमिच्छसि शनैर्हस्ताद्गलंश्चञ्चला -
त्स त्वामेव हनिष्यतीश्वरभटं मां हन्तुमीशोऽस्ति कः ।। (XI - 21)

"Are you mad? Insane? Don't forecast improbable and impossible happenings!" "You brute! it is you who are mad and insane. It is because I have conquered your mind". "Do you desire to taste the sharpness of my sword?" "Please do not raise your sword. It might fall from your trembling hand and kill you only. I am the servant of the Lord. Who can kill me?"

रे रे मन्द बहिः प्रयाहि यदि भो भोजेश कृष्णाश्रितो
भूयास्तर्हि तथा करोम्यपरथा त्वां नोभयत्रोत्सृजे ।
धैर्यस्थैर्ययुताच्युतप्रिय मनो मह्यं न वै रोचते
क्षेमायाभ्युदयाय च प्रतिदिनं तद्वैरिचेतो मम ।। (XI - 24)

"You prattling beast, get out!!" "Yes I obey your command, if, only if, you resort to my Lord Kṛṣṇa. Otherwise I will not leave you both here and hereafter. I abhor those steady minds having courage and resorted to Kṛṣṇa. But the minds of his enemies are always conducive to my welfare and growth".

At last Kaṁsa meets his death at Kṛṣṇa's hands.

Thus we see that Vādirāja has made a clever and effective use of this *Vākovākyālaṅkāra* which has contributed significantly to his poetic achievements and has made him worthy to share a rank among great poets of Sanskrit Literature.

CHAPTER VIII

GREAT BUT IGNORED

As it has been said at the end of chapter *Introduction*, this chapter VII attempts to correct many a scholar whose works do not give correct information about Vādirāja because of their ignorance and/or misunderstanding. But this does not mean any disrespect to their learning and scholarship. All are great scholars in their own right and are commanding respect from all who respect and revere scholarship.

The opinions of the scholars have been quoted followed by comments correcting the mistakes involved in them.

1) Prof. K.T. Pandurangi[1] :

1) "He (Sri Vadirajatirtha) was the sixteenth pontifical head of Soda Mutt ..." (p.xxv)

Comment : He was the twentieth pontifical head.

2) "It was he who fixed the duration of paryaya as two years. Formerly it was one and half months for each Mutt and all eight mutts used to have a turn every year." (pp.xxvi-xxvii)

Comment : It is true that it was Vādirāja who fixed the duration of *paryāya* as two years. But formerly it was of two months. Read:

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1. *Yuktimallikā*, Shri Sarvajnacharya Seva Sangha, Davangere, 1977, Introduction.

(i) मासद्वयात्मपर्यायपूजां मध्वप्रकल्पिताम् ।
वर्षद्वितयपर्यन्तां कल्पयामास सन्मतिः ।। *VGC*.IV.49.

(ii) मासद्वयात्मपर्यायादष्टभिर्यतिभिः कृतात् ।
क्लृप्तासीच्छीमदाचार्यैः कृष्णमूर्तेः समर्चना ।।
तां कालबलतः शक्तिवैकल्याद्दुष्करां परैः ।
आलक्ष्य वादिराजार्योऽकृत वर्षद्वयात्मिकाम् ।।
VGM.VIII.4-5

3) "Rukminishavijaya is a Mahakavya dealing with the same theme as of Shishupalavadha of Magha. This was composed when Sri Vadiraja camped at Poona. On seeing this poem the Peshwas of Poona honoured Sri Vadiraja for composing a poem that excelled Magha's poem." (p.xxviii-xxix)

Comment : The two *Mahākāvyas* do not deal with the same theme. There is a tradition that the *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* was composed at Poona (modern Pune). And it was honoured by the assembly of Pandits. There were no Peshwas at Poona in those days. (See for details-Appendix)

2) Dr. S. Ramachandra Rao[2] :

"The Rukmiṇīśavijaya in twenty-one cantos deals with the theme of the Bhāgavata Story of Śrī Krishna."

Comment : It has only nineteen cantos.

3) Dr. K. Krishnamurthy -

Dr. K. Krishnamurthy is the author of the Kannada work '*Samskrita Kāvya*'[3] which aims at introducing major

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2. *Sanskrit (under Vijayanagar 1336-1565 A.D.)* Article in *Karnatak Through The Ages*, Govt. of Mysore, 1968, p.641.
3. Prasaranga, University of Mysore, Mysore, 1974.

Sanskrit Poets (excluding dramatists). On p. 317 he mentions the names of some later *Mahākāvyas*, together with their authors. But the *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* of Vādirāja is not mentioned by him.

Dr. Krishnamurthy has also authored a monograph *Contribution of Karnatak to Sanskrit Literature (A General Survey)*[4] wherein he states :

"Great names in the history of Sanskrit literature like Vedanta Deshika (Srivaisnava), Appayya Dikshita (Shaiva Advaita Champion), and Vadiraja (Dvaitin) were all patronised by the Vijayanagara Court, now at the height of its glory. A number of commentaries and scholia were written during this period by the adherents of different religious sects which cannot be mentioned here. We may note in passing that the age of creative writing was over and had given place to an age of mannuals, tracts and compendiums in every branch of study."

Comment : Firstly, Vādirāja had not been patronised by Vijayanagar Court. On the contrary, it was Vādirāja who was besought more than once, by the Vijayanagar Kings when faced by crises. Secondly, Vādirāja's *Rukmiṇīśavijaya, Tīrthaprabandha* and other works testify to the fact that the age of creative writing was not over.

4) B. Gururajah Rao[5] :

"Sri Vadiraja Swamy ... flourished in the fifteenth century (A.D. 1480-1604)."

4. Vidyaratna R.S. Panchamukhi Oriental Research Institute, Dharwad, 1988.
5. *Srīmat Sanatsujatiyam with the commentary of Sri Vadirajaswami*, Bangalore Sriman Madhva Sangha Publication Series No.8, 1940, Preface.

Comment : He flourished from A.D. 1481 to 1601 i.e. the last part of the fifteenth century and the whole of the sixteenth century.

5) Dr. Raj Kumari Kubba :

Dr. Raj Kumari Kubba has authored a book '*Kṛṣṇa-Kāvya In Sanskrit Literature*'.[6] In the Preface, at p.ix, she observes: "The Kṛṣṇakāvyas composed after 1200 A.D. have also played a definite role and contributed much in shaping and enriching the Indian art and culture. But, unfortunately these later Kṛṣṇa-Kāvyas, though of high order, have suffered neglect at the hands of Sanskrit Scholars."

In her Introduction, she mentions by name more than sixty Kṛṣṇakāvyas. Her book deals mainly with three Kṛṣṇakāvyas originated in South India. They are - (i) *Śrīkṛṣṇavijaya* of Śaṅkarakavi (1500 A.D), (ii) *Rukmiṇīkalyāṇa* of Rājacūḍāmaṇi Dīkṣita (1600 A.D.) and (iii) *Harivilāsa* of Lolimbārāju.

But nowhere there is a mention of the *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* of Vādirāja, even though it is a major *Kṛṣṇakāvya* of the 16th century A.D. which originated in South India.

6) Dr. R.G. Gudi has published[7] his doctoral thesis in Kannada entitled "*Dāsasāhitya : Ondu Saiddhantika Adhyayana.*" Therein he observes, (at p.27) that Vādirāja was the first who began to compose in Kannada in the religious circles of Udupi and hence it appears that he had to encounter opposition from the contemporary society.

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6. Eastern Book Linkers, Delhi, 1982.
7. Srinidhi Prakashan, Athani, 1994.

In support of his conjecture he gives two evidences: (i) There are villages round about Udupi having the names of seven Maṭhs among the *Aṣṭamaṭhas* (like Phalimāru, Pejāvara & so on) but Vādirāja's Sodā-Maṭh is far away from Udupi (ii) There is a Kannada poem viz. *'Kollu Bega Kallarāśi'* (O God, Kill quickly hosts of thieves) composed by Vādirāja.

Comment : It is not true that there was opposition to Vādirāja from any section of the society on any count at Udupi. Various incidents of his life, particularly that of changing the period of *Paryāya* from two months to two years convincingly prove that he commanded high respect from both religious heads and common masses. (i) It is not true that Vādirāja's Maṭh does not have a village after its name near by Udupi. Dr. Gudi has ignored the fact that Sodā Maṭh was originally called Kumbhāsi Maṭh and there is a village by name Kumbhāsi near Udupi. (ii) The context of the composition of the poem is quite different. It is related to a skirmish caused by jealousy and heart burning (Interested readers are requested to read (i) Dr. G.K. Nippani's Kannada work "*Bhāvisamīra Śrīmad Vādirāja Gurusārvabhaumaru*" Shri Vādirāja Vāṅmaya Prakashana, Shimoga, 1993, pp.210 ff; (ii) *VGC*, fn. on IV. 57 on p.22; and (iii) *VGM*, fn, on VIII. 17, on p.49.

7) At the end let us consider Dr. B.N.K. Sharma's statements[8]

(A) "He is stated to have been a Tulu (Shivalli) Brahmin by birth."

Fn. "Others claim him to have been a Smārta by birth with sympathies towards Śaṁkara's system. In his

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8. *History of the Dvaita School of Vedānta And Its Literature*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1981.

Yuktimallikā (I.20) he says that he became profoundly dissatisfied with Māyāvāda and renounced it and became a follower of "Tattvavāda" (of Madhva). This is a strong indication that he was not originally a Mādhva. Succession to the Aṣṭamaṭhas of Uḍipi has always been confined to Shivalli Brahmins. The *Vṛttaratnasaṁgraha* and *Vādirāja-guruvaracaritāmṛta*, also state that he was a Taulava by birth. There is still a small minority among the "Shivalli" Brahmins remaining outside the fold of Madhva Sampradāya. Possibly Vādirāja's family might have belonged to this group." (p.414)

Comment : Frankly, this is an admixture of fact and fiction. The facts are: (i) Succession to the *Aṣṭamaṭhas* of Udupi has always been confined to Shivalli Brahmins (ii) There is a section of Shivalli Brahmins who are not Mādhvas, but are Smārtas.

But Vādirāja cannot have been a Smārta by birth Because. (i) It is true that he was a *Taulava* by birth. But the term *Taulava* is not expressive of any caste. It expresses only the region and it has been used in this sense only by the two biographies of Vādirāja referred to by Dr. Sharma, Read :

आसीद् द्विजेन्द्रः खलु शुद्धवंश्यः कश्चित् क्षितौ **तौळवमण्डलेषु** ।। I. 11
समाप्य तीर्थानि स सर्वशोऽपि संशुद्धगात्रः कुमतीन्निरस्यन् ।
अगात्पुन**स्तोलवमण्डलस्थं** श्रीमध्वनाथं रजतासनस्थम् ।। I. 60
समादृतस्तोलवमण्डलस्थैर्जनैश्च भूपैरपि वादिराजः ।। I. 66

Vṛttaratnasaṅgraha.

ii) कुमारपाणिना सृष्टे **तौलवे मण्डले** पुरा ।। I. 5
कदाचित्तौलवे देशे सञ्चरन्नञ्चितक्रियः ।। III. 45

Vādirājaguruvaracaritāmṛta

Hence, all born in the Tulu or Taulava region should not be held to be Smārta Shivalli Brahmins.

(ii) Dr. Sharma states - "Others claim him to have been a Smārta by birth with sympathies towards Śaṁkara's system." But as he does not specify 'others', this statement does not deserve any credence.

(iii) Dr. Sharma finds 'strong indication' in *Yuktimallikā* I.20 to prove Vādirāja to be 'not originally a Mādhva', but a Smārta Brahmin. But he does not quote the verse nor does he analyse it: one can note that there are no words indicative of Vādirāja's 'profound dissatisfaction with Māyāvāda' and of his 'renouncing it' to 'become a follower of "Tattvavāda" (of Madhva). There are no such words like '*asantuṣṭah*' and '*tyaktvā*' in the verse. Moreover, the *Yuktimallikā* has been commented by Vādirāja's brother Surottamatīrtha (*Bhāvavilāsinīvyākhyā*) and by H.H. Śrī Satyapramodatīrtha, the present pontiff of the Uttarādi Maṭh (*Vivṛti*). The relevant verse with both the commentaries has been quoted hereunder for the ready reference of interested persons to see whether Dr. Sharma's assumption has any support from the verse :

अतो मायावादमतान्नाम्नैवातिजुगुप्सितात् ।
भीतोऽहमभजं तत्त्ववादिनामेव पद्धतिम् ।।

भावविलासिनीव्याख्या - उपसंहरन्दोषान्तरमाह । **अत इति** ।।
नाम्ना मायावाद इति प्रसिद्धनाम्ना भीतः निंदां भगवतः शृण्वंस्तत्परस्य जनस्य वा। ततो नापैति यस्सोपि यात्यधस्सुकृताच्युत इत्यादि-वचनार्थपर्यालोचनया भीतः।।

विवृतिः - **अत इति** । दुःशास्त्रश्रवणमात्रस्यापि पातित्यहेतुत्वात् सच्छास्त्राभ्यासस्य पुमर्थसाधनत्वाच्चेत्यर्थः। क्रमेण भीतः, अभजम् इत्युभयत्रान्वयः । तदुक्तं पद्मपुराणे, 'मायावादमसच्छास्त्रं प्रच्छन्नं बौद्धमुच्यते '

इति । शृणु देवि प्रवक्ष्यामि तामसानि यथाक्रमम् । येषां श्रवणमात्रेण पातित्यं ज्ञानिनामपीति च । ज्ञानिनोऽपि मदादयः अशुभाद्बिभ्यति शुभं च कामयन्ते। तदुक्तं अनुव्याख्याने तृ.च.६ अधिकरणे 'बिभ्यति स्माशुभान्नित्यं सकामाश्च शुभे सदा' इति । किमुत जिज्ञासवः इति भावः ।।

Here one can note that the emphasis in this verse is on '*atah*' (therefore), which clearly states that Vādirāja is giving his verdict on the issue of the acceptibility or otherwise, of the *Māyāvāda* discussed by him in previous verses (12 ff). Both Surottamatīrtha and Satyapramodatīrtha have highlighted this significant point in their glosses. There is no indication here, strong or weak, to conclude that Vādirāja became a convert to the *Tattvavāda* of Madhvācārya.

Moreover there are positive evidences to prove that he was a Mādhva by birth. He was born by the grace of Vāgīśa. He had his *upanayana* at the age of five when he began his studies under Vidyānidhi, Vāgīśa's disciple. Vāgīśa ordained him to ascetichood at the age of eight. These and other incidents of Vādirāja's boyhood are sufficient to prove that he was born as a Mādhva only.

(B) *A life of 120 years is traditionally ascribed to him*. There is no doubt he enjoyed a long life and presided over the Mutt at Sode (13 miles from Sirsi, N.Kanara - the "Sonda" of the *Gazetteers* and Buchanan) established by him, for a number of years. He seems to have had two head quarters - one at Udipi and the other at Sode, where he passed away." (p.414)

Comment : Firstly, the italicisation of the first sentence "a life of 120 years is traditionally ascribed to him" suggests that Dr. Sharma is not willing to accept the fact that Vādirāja lived for 120 years. But even history has recorded a very long

life of 120 years to Vādirāja. There are also inscriptions referring to incidents which happened in the life of Vādirāja during the years A.D. 1532-33, 1571, 1582 and 1593. The *carama-śloka* giving the date of Vādirāja's entering alive the *Vṛndāvana* at Sodā has been accepted as authentic by Dr. Sharma too.

Secondly, the Math had not been established by Vādirāja. It had been established as one of the *Aṣṭamaṭhas* by Śrī Madhvācārya and had the name Kumbhāsi Maṭh.

Thirdly, it is not correct to say that Vādirāja 'passed away' like any other mortal. The correct usage is, "he made '*Bṛndāvana-praveśa*'" as Dr. Sharma has stated.[9]

(C) "It is also surprising that in his *Tīrthaprabandha*, he makes only a covert reference to Vyāsatirtha along with seven other ascetics entombed at Ānegondi." (p.413, fn.2).

Comment : This statement tries to suggest that in his *Tīrthaprabandha*, Vādirāja mentions eight ascetics entombed at Ānegondi, but does not mention overtly their names including that of Vyāsarāya. But the fact is quite different. The relevant verse and the commentary of Nārāyaṇācārya, Vādirāja's disciple, are as follows :

राजधानी जयति सा गजगह्वरसंज्ञिता ।
यत्र भान्ति गजा मध्वराद्धान्तधरणीधराः ।·। (III.17)
गजगह्वरं वर्णयति । **राजधानीति** । **गजगह्वरसंज्ञिता** गजगह्वरं इति संज्ञा गजगह्वरसंज्ञा। सा संजाता अस्य इति गजगह्वरसंज्ञिता । **सा राजधानी** अपभ्रष्टभाषया आनेगोंदीति पुरी। राजानः धीयन्ते अस्यामिति राजधानी । **जयति** उत्कृष्टा वर्तते । गजगह्वरत्वं वर्णयति । यत्रेति । **यत्र** गजगह्वराख्यपुर्याम्। **मध्वराद्धान्तधरणीधराः** मध्वराद्धान्त एव

9. *Dharmaprakash* Journal, Madras, January 1982, p.17.

श्रीमध्वाचार्यकृतसिद्धान्त एव धरणी भूमिः तां धरन्तीति तथा । धरा धरित्रीत्यमरः । मध्वसिद्धान्तधरणीधराः पद्मनाभतीर्थश्रीमच्चरणप्रभृतयः श्रीमध्वाचार्यशिष्यप्रशिष्यभूताः संन्यासिन एव **गजाः** । **भान्ति** शोभन्ते । भा दीप्ताविति धातुः ।।

Anybody can see that herein there is no 'covert reference to Vyāsatīrtha along with seven other ascetics entombed at Ānegondi'.

APPENDIX

Rukmiṇīśavijaya-Where was it composed ? How is it superior to Māgha's _Śiśupālavadha_ ?

There are three biographies of Vādirāja 1) *Śrīmadvṛttaratnasaṅgraha* (*VRS*) of Raghunāthācārya, the disciple of Vādirāja himself. Read:

i) श्रीवादिराजशिष्येण राघवार्यस्य सूनुना । कृतोऽयं रघुनाथेन प्रवन्धो रत्नसंग्रहः ।। (*VRS* III.55).

ii) रघुनाथाचार्यनाम्नां वादिराजगुरोः पुरा। शिष्येण रचितो भाति वृत्तरत्नसुसंग्रहः।। (*VGC*.VII.23).

iii) रघुनाथकवीन्द्रपूर्वकैरुदितान् रत्नसुसंग्रहादिषु । उपलभ्य हि तत्रतत्रगान् ...।। (*VGM*.I.10)

This is published as a part of *Stotramahodadhi* by G.A. Sawant at Belgaum in 1978, (pp.343-371).

2) *Śrīvādirājaguruvaracaritāmṛta* (*VGC*) of Rāma-candrācārya, the disciple of Vedanidhi, the grand-successor of Vādirāja. Read :

श्रीवेदवेद्यं परमं गुरुं तं प्रणम्य तच्छिष्यवरान्गुरून्मे ।
श्रीवेदनिध्याख्ययतींस्तदाज्ञामालम्ब्य संवच्मि गुरोश्चरित्रम् ।। (*VGC*. I.3)

So the author was not far removed from Vādirāja. As Dr. Nippani observes "the authenticity of this work is unquestionable since it has been written just after the demise

of Vādirāja and also as per the instructions of Vedanidhitīrtha. There is every possiblility to state that the author, at his early age, must have had seen Vādirāja."[1]

This has been published by Srimadvadirajeeya Grantha Prakasana Samithi, Udipi. in 1954.

3) *Śrīvādirājaguṇaratnamālā* (*VGM*)) of Saṭpurācārya, same as Vāsudevācārya Nippani (1844-1902). The author admits that he is indebted to both *VRS* and *VGC*. Read :

रघुनाथकवीन्द्रपूर्वकैरुदितान् रत्नसुसंग्रहादिषु । उपलभ्य हि तत्रतत्रगान् महदैतिह्यसदुक्तिगोचरान् ।। गुरुराजचरित्रसन्मणीनपि नैकत्रगतान्प्रगृह्य तान् । गुरुवर्यकृपालवाश्रयाद्रचयाम्याशु कुतूहलात्स्रजम् ।। (I.10-11)

Further, he confesses :

माहात्म्यानां गौरवाणां विवक्षोर्बद्धुं मालां कौतुकाद्वा मणीनाम् ।
पौर्वापर्यादिक्रमव्यत्ययं मे क्षाम्यन्त्वार्या हन्त कारुण्यशीलाः ।। (I.13)

It is not considered as authentic as *VGC*, which is generally followed while narrating the incidents of Vādirāja's life.[2] This should be noted while discussing the question "where was the *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* composed ?"

The general belief is that the poem was composed at Poona to excel Māgha's *Śiśupālavadha* and this belief is based on the account given in *VGC* which is as follows :

ततः पुण्यपुरीं प्राप्तो भेरीताडनपूर्वकम् ।
काव्यश्रेष्ठं माघकाव्यं गजमूर्धनि पूज्यते ।।

1. The *Yuktimallikā* of *Śrī Vādirājatīrtha* (*A Critical Study*) . *Guṇasaurabha*, Śrī Vādirāja Vāṅmaya Prakāśana Shimoga, 1992, p.3.
2. Recently (1993) Śrī Vādirāja Vāṅmaya Prakāśana Shimoga, has published Dr.G.K.Nippani's Voluminous Kannada Work "*Bhāvisamīra Śrīmadvādirāja Gurusārvabhaumaru*" which deals extensively in its own way with all the issues connected with Vādirāja and his divinity.

इत्याघोषितमाकर्ण्य सभापतिमवोचत ।
अस्मत्पुरे महाकाव्यमेकं श्रेष्ठं प्रकाशते ।।
दीयेत समयः कश्चिद्दर्शयिष्ये परीक्ष्यताम् ।
अङ्गीकुर्वति विज्ञौघे गुरुरेकोनविंशता ।।
दिवसैरेकदिवसे ह्येकसर्गक्रमेण सः ।
रुक्मिणीशमहाकाव्यं निर्ममे सुरसाकरम् ।।
अवेक्षणाय विदुषां संसदं प्रैषयत्सुधीः ।
परिशत्सा परीक्ष्याथ विस्मितानन्दपूरिता ।।
रुक्मिणीशमहाकाव्यमुत्तमं माघतोऽपि च ।
इत्याघोष्य च सम्मान्य प्रार्चयत्कविसत्तमम् ।।
ख्यापयामास विदुषां परिषद्गुणमोदिनी ।। (III.4.10)

But the account given in *VGM* makes Sodā the place of the composition of the poem :

सोदापुरमहीपालो विद्वज्जनसमागमे ।
नानाविधानां काव्यानां गुणानालोचयत्पुरा ।।
शब्दार्थप्रौढिचातुर्यसौष्ठवप्रमुखैर्गुणैः ।
सर्वेषु काव्यजातेषु माघस्याधिक्यमभ्यधुः ।।
वारणोपरि संस्थाप्य क्ष्मापतिर्माघपुस्तकम् ।
प्रतिग्रामगवीथीषु ख्यापनार्थं न्ययोजयत् ।।
तदा नापरकाव्यस्यातुल्ये त्वयि कवौ सति ।
मानना भवितुं युक्तेत्यवादि गुरुराड् जनैः ।
भवद्भिरयमुद्योगः कार्य ऊर्ध्वं दिनाष्टकात् ।
इति सोदानृपं शिष्यैरचीकथदनल्पधीः ।।
अनन्यसुकरं दिव्यं नानावृत्तोपशोभितम् ।
श्लेषानुप्रासयमकचित्रबन्धविभूषितम् ।।....
कैवल्यवर्त्मपाथेयं ज्ञानविज्ञानसाधनम् ।
स रुक्मिणीशविजयाख्यं महाकाव्यमातनोत् ।।
प्रेषयामास राज्ञे तत्प्रेक्ष्य सर्वे विपश्चितः ।।

कालत्रयेऽप्यसामान्यं तुतुषुर्विस्मयान्विताः ।।
सोदाभूपोऽपि माघादेर्मत्वा कोटिगुणाधिकम् ।
आरोप्य करिणः पृष्ठेऽमानयत्प्रतिपत्तनम् ।।
सुपर्वाणः सुपर्णाद्याः गन्धर्वा मुनयोऽपि हि ।
स्वस्वलोकसभास्वेतत्पूजयामासुरादरात् ।। (V.34-39...47-50)

Hence the question arises as to whether the poem was composed at Poona or at Sọdā. Of course, there is a 'third umpire'. But the following account given by *VRS* does not help to find an answer to the question :

तुतोष लोकः कविवर्यवादिराजाख्यवृक्षादुपलभ्य रम्यम् ।
सुवर्णमाधुर्यरसादिभिश्च पूर्णं महाकाव्यफलं सुवृत्तम् ।।
रुक्मिणीशविजयस्य रुक्मिणीवल्लभप्रियतमस्य चातुरी ।
माघकाव्यमुखकाव्यमण्डलं नाप पापहरणस्य शृण्वताम् ।।
(I.35-36)

Here, nothing is said about the place of the composition of the poem. So to be on the safer side, after narrating the incident as per *VGC*, I remarked " According to Ṣaṭpurācārya the author of Śrī Vādirājaguṇaratnamālā, this incident happened at Sodā" and quoted *VGM*.V.49 (This remark has been made specific in this book).

Dr. G.K.Nippani has dealt with this question in his Kannada work "*Bhavīsamīra Śrīmadvādirāja Gurusārva-bhaumaru* (Part-I.pp.139-143) and wants to conclude that the incident did happen at Poona. According to him the statement of *VGM* should be understood as follows: "Just as the assembly of scholars at Poona rejoiced on relishing the merits of the poem, so *too* the king of Sodā rejoiced. This is revealed by the word '*api*' in the verse beginning with

Sodābhūpo'pi". Then he states "This opinion is not properly interpreted by some" and refers to my remark quoted above.

Therefore one should re-read the relevant verses of *VGM* to know whether the co-ordinating conjuction *'api'* (also) in *'Sodābhūpo'pi* is related to the incident, as Dr.Nippani wants to understand, which happened at Poona, or to some other incident. Hence the lines to be re-read are as follows :

सोदापुरमहीपालो विद्वज्जनसमागमे ।
नानाविधानां काव्यानां गुणानालोचयत्पुरा ।।....
सर्वेषु काव्यजातेषु माघस्याधिक्यमभ्यधुः ।।....
स रुक्मिणीशविजयाख्यं महाकाव्यमातनोत् ।।
प्रेषयामास राज्ञे तत्प्रेक्ष्य सर्वे विपश्चितः ।
कालत्रयेऽप्यसामान्यं तुतुषुर्विस्मयान्विताः ।।
and सोदाभूपोऽपि माघादेर्मत्वा कोटिगुणाधिकम् ।
आरोप्य करिणः पृष्ठेऽमानयत्प्रतिपत्तनम् ।।

Here it is expressly stated that the King of Sodā had an assembly of scholars which judged the poem of Māgha as the best one and that Vādirāja composed his *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* to excel Māgha's poem. And when he sent it to the King (i.e. the royal assembly), on seeing it (*tat-prekṣya*) all scholars (*serve vipaścitah*) rejoiced (*tutuṣuh*). This is the first incident which happened. The co-ordinating conjunction *'api'* now joins this incident to another incident narrated in the verse *'Sodābhūpo'pi....'*. It means : "The King of Sodā *also* honoured the poem by mounting it on the back of the elephant, having considered it far superior to Māgha's poem".

Hence the co-ordinating conjunction '*api*' does not relate to the incident which happened, as Dr.Nippani wants to understand, at Poona. It only conjoins two incidents both of which happened at Sodā itself, viz, rejoicing of the scholars and the King's honouring the poem.

Hence, the question "where was the *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* composed ?" remains without a conclusive answer.

But all the three biographies are unanimous in stating that *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* excels Māgha's *Śiśupālavadha*. Why ? Shri U.Venkatakrishna Rao replies :

Why was the Kavya of Magha denied the honour is a question to be scrutinised carefully. We may straightway assign two reasons. The title of the old Kavya was sentimentally objectionable and even offensive and inauspicious as it contained the word Vadha or killing. The second reason seems to have been that it prominently featured the Pratinayaka or the counter-hero. A drama like Julius Caesar in which the hero at the end of Act II is killed is replulsive to Indian taste even though his ghost decides the course of the further action - न तस्यैव (नायकस्य) वधं ब्रूयादन्योत्कर्षाभिधित्सया, as Bhamaha, our famous critic puts it. True, some critics like Dandin, might agree to such a glorification of the counter-hero, bringing the hero later (after the fashion of the Uttara Kanda in the Ramayana where Ravana's greatness is described only to be defeated by Sri Rama in the end) (In English such descriptions are common as when the Duke of Wellington is referred to as world-conqueror's conqueror). But obviously such a method does not appeal to our seniments. Vadiraja steered clear of both these defects and his title at once satisfied the sentiments of the Pandits in Poona. Shri Vaishnavas also have avoided the

offensive word Vadha and entitled their Kavya Yadavabhyudaya or the Triumph of Yadava Sri Krishna. But our Swamiji's word Vijaya, anybody can see, is better than mere Abhyudaya. Again Rukmineesha featured prominently the Goddess Sri who had incarnated as Rukminee as the Bhagavata had by that time made popular the word श्रियः पतिः as referring to Sri Krishna ..... It became customary, again, to refer to the visits of such great Swamijis as Vijayas ; in this connection it might be noted that it was Madhva's immediate disciple Trivikrama or his son Narayana Panditacarya who conceived the happy idea of composing a Kavya named Madhva Vijaya wherein the hero was Jeevottama, imitating the tenth Skandha where the hero was Purusottama or Devottama, Sri Krishna."[3]

Dr. B.N.K.Sharma does not want to agree with (i) Vādirāja composed his *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* at Poona and (ii) it was composed to excel Magha's *Śisupālavadha*. He states :

" The story current about the *Rukminisavijaya* that it was composed by Vādirāja at Pune within a short space of nineteen days, to rival the Māgha Kāvya which was being acclaimed by the assembly of Pandits of Pune as the best among Samskṛt Kāvyas and was taken in procession on the back of an elephant by the orders of the King, seems to be apocryphal, as Pune was neithar a capital nor had a King till the time of Peshwas in 1714 (one hundred and fourteen years *after* the year of Bṛndavanapraveśa of Vādirāja) !

"Apart from this, the theme and outlook of the two Mahākāvyas of Māgha and Vādirāja differ widely. The *Śiśupālavadha* is based on the story of the Sabhā Parva of

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3. *Thus Sang Śrī Vādirāja Teertha*, Publisher- K.N.Rao, Durga Stores, Gadag, 1970. pp.39 ff

Mahābhārata. Vādirāja's is based on the Bhāgavata Purāṇa ... Māgha's work is Vīrarasapradhāna, while Vādirāja's may be fittingly described as Bhaktirasapradhāna and Dvaita philosophy oriented .... Moreover, Vādirāja himself is known to have held Māgha's Kāvya in high esteem as may be seen from his citing for support two significant passages from the Śiśupālavadha to illustrate the approved use of the terms bheda and bhinna in the sense of close admixture (miśraṇam)

भिन्ननीरत्यवाङ् माघे भिदुराम्भस्त्यवागपि ।
विमिश्रतामाह यस्मात् तस्माद् भेदो विमिश्रणम् ।।

(*Yuktimallikā*, भेद.सौ. 288-89)

"In the circumstances, it does not seem probable that he would have contested its classical merits. The two Kāvyas have no ideological affinity and cannot therefore be compared"[4]

The following comments may be made :

A) As noted above, no biographer of Vādirāja maintains any King or Peshwa ruling at Pune when Vādirāja is believed to have composed his *Rukmiṇīśavijaya*.

B) All the three biographers agree that the *Rukmiṇīśavijaya* excels the *Śiśupālavadha*. Two of them clearly state that Vādirāja composed to excel Māgha.

It must be noted that when it is observed to excel Māgha's poem, the observation is made considering the two as *Mahākāvyas* as such. There is no rule that the theme should be the same for such comparison. For example the following famous verse -

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4. *Rukmiṇīśa Vijaya of Śrī Vādirāja*, article in *Dharmaprakash*, Madras, January 1982, pp.17-18.

तावद्भा भारवेर्भाति यावन्माघस्य नोदयः ।
उदिते च पुनर्माघे भारवेर्भा रवेरिव ।।

lays down that Māgha's *Śiśupālavadha* excels Bhāravi's *Kirātārjunīya*. But the two *Mahākāvyas* differ in many details including the theme and the number of cantos. Of course, as Dr. Sharma records Vādirāja *does* quote Māgha as an authority to understand one of the meanings of the word '*bheda*' or *bhinna*'. But one fails thereby to understand that i)"Vādirāja himself is known to have held Māgha's Kāvya in high esteem" ii) "It does not seem probable that he would have contested its classical merits."

It should be said that this one stray quotation of Māgha is not sufficient to prove that Vādirāja held Māgha's *Kāvya* in high esteem. Because firstly, in the immediately preceeding verse (287) Vādirāja has used the word '*Vidvas*' (learned) to refer to all authorities including Māgha, who have accepted several meanings of the terms '*bheda*' and '*bhinna*'. And of course, Māgha is respected as quite learned as can be seen by the off-quoted saying - नवसर्गगते माघे नवः शब्दः न विद्यते । which suggests that Māgha was a treasure of words. But a mere treasure of words is not sufficient to make anybody a *Mahākavi* ! And hence, there is no ground to remark that Vādirāja might not have contested the classical merits of Māgha's poem. Further, it is not laid down that any two *Mahākāvyas* can be compared only when they have idealogical affinities. They can be compared as *Mahākāvyas* on the basis of the characteristics of a *Mahākāvya* laid down by rhetoricians like Bhāmaha, Daṇḍin and others. The comparison made by Shri U.Venkatakrishna Rao has been already quoted above.

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